DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 457 936 JC 010 695

AUTHOR	Moore, Linda Hamman
TITLE	A Mixed-Method Approach to Evaluating Learning Communities for Underprepared Community College Students: The Integrated Studies Communities at Parkland College.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	204p.; Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses - Doctoral Dissertations (041)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC09 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Basic Writing; Community Colleges; *Cooperative Planning; *Developmental Programs; Educational Cooperation; Learning Modalities; Learning Processes; *Learning Strategies; *Remedial Programs; *Teacher Collaboration; Team Teaching; Transitional Programs; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Parkland College IL

ABSTRACT

This study evaluated two developmental learning communities, named the Integrated Studies Communities ISC, at Parkland College in Illinois. The primary purpose of the study was to compare the students in the ISC with similar underprepared students in the regular curriculum. The ISC offers four linked courses, and participating students take them together as a class. The report examines both a pilot study and full implementation (ISC II and III) of the program. The author found that in the fall, ISC II completers earned 11.05 credit hours compared with the 9.81 credit hours of the comparison group, while ISC III completers earned an average of 12.77 credit hours, compared with the comparison group's average of 8.9 credit hours. The results for the spring were lower, but the difference over the course of the year remained significant. Independent t-tests revealed there was no significant difference in GPAs between the two groups. The author also notes that the ISC students were taking rigorous, college-level courses. Includes 10 figures, 17 tables, 75 references, and 6 appendices, including the research instrument. A 22-item instrument with an eighth-grade reading level is a product of the study. (NB)

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A MIXED-METHOD APPROACH TO EVALUATING LEARNING COMMUNITIES FOR UNDERPREPARED COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS: THE INTEGRATED STUDIES COMMUNITIES AT PARKLAND COLLEGE

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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2000

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LINDA HAMMAN MOORE

ENTITLED A MIXED-METHOD APPROACH TO EVALUATING LEARNING COMMUNITIES FOR UNDERPREPARED COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS: THE INTEGRATED STUDIES COMMUNITIES AT PARKLAND COLLEGE

BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

A growing number of post-secondary institutions are touting the academic and social benefits of learning communities, curricular structures that link and integrate courses across disciplines, and include team-teaching and collaborative, cooperative approaches to learning. Many colleges and universities are trying various sorts of learning community structures for entering freshmen or for honors students, and are suggesting that the connections made, both academic and social, are rejuvenating faculty and enhancing student retention. Historically, students entering college without college-level skills in reading, writing, and mathematics have had high rates of attrition, but learning communities have not been tried as often with this population. Parkland College, a community college in Champaign, Illinois, piloted a learning community for underprepared students in the spring of 1998. Planners adopted a coordinated studies model, a full-time, team-taught learning community that, in this case, integrated the content from four courses, some developmental and some college-level. Full implementation of two similar developmental learning communities, named the Integrated Studies Communities, occurred during the 1998-99 academic year. This study employs a unique combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in a comprehensive evaluation of these communities. The evaluation includes various measures of academic success, but also uses multiple methods to explore the students' adjustment to college, as well as the experience of the participating faculty members. A 22-item instrument with an eighth-grade reading level, designed to measure student adjustment, and derived from Baker and Siryk's (1989) Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire, is a product of this study.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to faculty, staff, and administrators, at Parkland College and elsewhere, who have been, and continue to be, committed to making higher education accessible and meaningful to their students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the four remarkable women who served as my committee members: Lizanne DeStefano, Jane Loeb, Debra Bragg, and Zelema Harris. Any one of these women could serve as an extraordinary role model, balancing rare scholarship with heart-and-soul. The four together were inspiring. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to a consistently rational and optimistic advisor, Lizanne DeStefano.

An enormous debt is owed to the faculty and students of the Integrated Studies Communities and to numerous faculty members and students in the regular curriculum. Their generosity with their time, and the thoughtfulness of their participation, contributed directly to the quality of the study.

Other valuable contributors included the members of the Learning Communities Task Force, several chairs of academic departments, and the upper administration of Parkland College. Without the enthusiastic support of Parkland's President Zelema Harris, and Vice-President Dale Ewen, the Integrated Studies Communities would be no more than another interesting proposal.

I hope my fellow counselors at Parkland College know how much their support has meant. If I have not conveyed it clearly or often enough, I am trying again now.

Finally, I would like to thank Thomas and Adrienne for their patience. Throughout their mother's preoccupation with doctoral study, they were making the transition from childhood to adolescence with grace and humor.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It seems to be part of college lore that the issue of "underprepared" students is a recent problem, brought about by open admissions policies and the civil rights era. According to Boylan (as cited in Illinois Community College Board [ICCB], 1997), however, the first documented "preparatory department" was established at the University of Wisconsin in 1849. The Southern Regional Education Board (as cited in ICCB, 1997 and State of Illinois Board of Higher Education [IBHE], 1997) reports that, by 1900, 84% of U.S. colleges and universities had preparatory schools to address students' academic deficiencies. More than 40% of college freshmen enrolled in these "pre-collegiate" programs 100 years ago.

Brier (1984) offers an enlightening account of the nineteenth-century "preparation controversy" (p. 1) at Vassar College and Cornell University. Both of these New-York schools were founded to educate individuals formerly uninitiated into postsecondary education: in the case of Vassar, to educate women, and at Cornell, to educate the "sons and daughters of farmers and mechanics" (p. 3). Representatives of both institutions were concerned with their school's public image, and worked to influence secondary school curricula to increase preparedness. Then, as now, the conflicts among the faculty were great regarding the issue of underprepared students. Some welcomed the opportunity to include these students, while other faculty members doubted whether students with lesser, or less developed, skills belonged at their institution. Vassar and Cornell, however, responded to the challenge in very different ways. Vassar established extensive developmental courses. Cornell attempted to hide the issue by making exceptions and referring students for supplementary instruction. Although they continued to deny problems with preparedness at

Cornell, Brier's review of records found the establishment of an 1869 "Committee on Doubtful Cases" (of admission) (p. 17). While these two schools, and many others like them, obviously became prestigious institutions, perhaps admitting fewer and fewer "preparatory" students over the ensuing 130 years, the societal problem of academically underprepared students did not go away.

Community colleges clearly have assumed the mission of educating the majority of students from non-traditional and disenfranchised groups, many of whom require remediation in some basic skills area: reading, writing, or mathematics. In 1996, 88% of Illinois students that were enrolled in developmental course work, at postsecondary institutions, were students at community colleges. The number of students enrolled in these courses in 1996 reflected a 30.1% increase over 1991 enrollment (ICCB, 1997). While some of the reported increase can be accounted for by the state's re-definition of which mathematics courses comprise developmental course work, the trend points toward growing numbers of college students in need of some sort of remedial assistance. It seems well established that the gap between high school completion standards and college-level skills has been around for quite some time, and that the number of students pursuing postsecondary education continues to grow; thus, more and more students are needing assistance bridging this gap.

A 1996 report from the National Center for Educational Statistics (as cited in ICCB, 1997) indicates that 40% of first-time freshmen in community colleges are underprepared in at least one basic skills area. African-American students, in particular, are overrepresented in the group of students enrolled in these pre-college level courses. Furthermore, data suggest that students who take three or more developmental classes seem to be at the greatest risk for non-completion of a degree. The obvious and frightening outcome for underprepared

students that do not, or cannot, persist toward their academic and career goals is that they are likely to remain in powerless and disenfranchised positions in society.

Local Context

These concerns, patterns, and trends all are evident at Parkland College, a community college in Champaign, Illinois. Parkland is one of 48 community colleges in Illinois, and serves a district of 237,000 urban and rural residents, with 28 high school districts over twelve counties. With an enrollment of more than 9,000 students, Parkland is a comprehensive community college, offering over 80 different certificate and degree options.

Parkland College's sprawling, contemporary campus is located on the northwest edge of town. The college is only a few miles away from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, an institution often considered the crown jewel of the state university system. Consequently, Parkland is situated in a town with a highly-educated populace, a community in which one of every 38 citizens has earned a doctoral degree. At the same time, it is located in a town in which nearly 30% of the school-age children are considered "low income," another frequent predictor of academic unpreparedness.

Learning Communities

Many scholars view a traditional course-by-course curriculum as failing to meet the needs of many students, certainly including the underprepared students among them. Educators such as Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews, and Smith (1990), Tinto (1996), and Rendón (1994) instead advocate the formation of learning communities, restructured curricula that link or cluster courses from multiple disciplines. The intent is to help students

move beyond the barriers faced previously, and comfortably meld into the academic and social worlds of higher education as they work collaboratively in a scholarly community.

Some History of Developmental Education at Parkland College

The year is 1977. Five energetic, young faculty members at Parkland College are meeting to discuss how to address the needs of underprepared college students. What might be some ways to get these students ready for college-level work? What can be done to give them the experience of being academically successful? This committee, representing various departments and disciplines across the college (English, Reading, Social Sciences, GED classes, and Counseling), decides to propose a model in which a cohort of students enrolls in four linked classes. Although this has not been tried at Parkland, similar models being tried out on the West Coast are gaining enthusiasts from student, faculty, and administrative ranks.

Jump ahead 20 years to the fall of 1997. Seven energetic faculty members at Parkland College are meeting to discuss how to address the needs of underprepared college students. What might be the best way to get these students thinking and working on the college level? What will increase the likelihood of them being academically successful? This seven-member Task Force is made up of individuals from various departments and disciplines across campus: English, Reading, Social Sciences, Adult Basic Education, Math, Advising, and Counseling. They are thinking of proposing a model in which a cohort of students enrolls in four integrated classes, a model that never has been implemented at Parkland.

Interested in curricular changes that could enhance student adjustment and persistence, the Vice President for Academic and Student Services at Parkland College, Dale Ewen, appointed a task force, in the fall of 1997, charged with developing a learning

community to be piloted during the Spring 1998 semester. This evaluator, a counselor at Parkland College, was a member of that task force. It also may be helpful to know that three of the actors in the 1977 scenario above were major players in the 1997-1999 story as well. The Chair of the Task Force was the GED instructor in 1977. The Social Science and English faculty members mentioned in 1977 now serve as Chairs of their respective departments, Social Sciences/Human Services and Humanities.

In fact, the 1977 committee was only the first of many documented attempts to coordinate services for the underprepared student population, attempts which, for some reason or another, rarely seemed to be implemented. Understandably, this puzzles newer faculty, and is downright exhausting to the veterans. Students who are not accustomed to reading and writing critically, and who have lived only marginal academic existences, continue to enroll at Parkland, however, hoping that something will be different for them at this school. The realists and skeptics on campus wondered if this latest task force could succeed where others had not. Task force members had their own explanations for past failures:

> Committees don't have any real power. They meet, plan, and make recommendations, but they don't have the authority to DO anything.
>
> We were set up to fail. The timing was wrong. No one had responsibility for coordinating the effort.
>
> There were too many naysayers. There were people on the committee that didn't support the concept.
>
> The administration didn't support it.
>
> People were inflexible. For some, it was their way or no way.
>
> The counselors never enrolled the students.
>
> The students weren't interested/were too busy/didn't understand.

> Proposals are shot down at the committee level. There's an unwillingness to be innovative enough. Institutional barriers exist. People say, "We don't do things that way."
>
> There's an honest split in philosophy. It's not necessarily based on racism, elitism, or classism.

The Task Force

The first meeting of the task force was a heady experience. The wounds that some had suffered as a result of earlier unsupported initiatives did not seem debilitating. This was a task force, not just another committee, and it was directed by the administration to create a product by January. After all, one task force member met with Dale Ewen the previous summer, and she believed he understood quite well the resources needed to get this sort of program rolling. Freed from the concept of the 50-minute class and other trappings of the traditional curriculum, task force members were buoyant as they put together an integration of courses they thought would be appealing to both students and participating faculty: English, Critical Comprehension Skills (reading and study skills), Orientation, and Introduction to Sociology. Certainly they were aware that their model challenged the institution's standard operating procedures, as college policy prohibited students at this reading level from taking college-level, transferable courses, but task force members felt they had been encouraged to color outside the lines a bit. This was, after all, a pilot project; it could be tried and refined.

A workable model was reached with extraordinary ease. Some task force members expressed surprise at the apparent compatibility of this group. "Ultimata aren't being given this time around. We're all workaholics. We're all enthusiastic. Maybe we're a tad naive. I don't see our similarities as negatives." Others do not even raise an eyebrow. "That's why

[we] were selected. We've heard so much about the reasons why this won't work. We needed a collection of people willing to do it anyway." One member cautioned against getting too comfortable on this task force: "We have to remember that we have to develop and nurture external stakeholders, too."

Something happened, however, during the two weeks between Meetings One and Two. Specifically, three social science faculty members opposed the inclusion of SOC 101 (Introduction to Sociology) in the model. The lines of authority are unclear, but these individuals assumed the power to block the implementation of the model, presumably because one of them is the Social Sciences department chair. He was invited to the second meeting, which took place in the intimate meeting quarters of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

The energy evident in the first meeting still existed, but this time, it was generated by anger as much as by exuberance. Genuine philosophical differences are acted out. The Social Sciences chair's own teaching experience and the literature he has read have convinced him that students at this reading level cannot grasp the concepts of SOC 101. Task force members counter with other literature and examples. They agree that the students have been unsuccessful in SOC 101 in the traditional curriculum, but explain that the point of the pilot project is to test a different sort of curricular structure. No one budges. As tempers and voices rise, the director of the CETL attempts to play the gracious hostess, making the rounds at the table, offering coffee to her contentious guests. "We have three white males telling us it won't work," fumes a frustrated English instructor, also white and male. The Social Sciences chair appears hurt and offended, and also puzzled that his experience is not being given more credence.

In the end, it becomes clear that these "three white males" indeed can prevent the implementation of the model. With their newly-clipped wings, the Task Force shrugs off the chair's invitation to present the models to the rest of the social sciences faculty, and decides to pursue a model working with the Humanities Department instead.

Understanding the SOC 101 debate. "There is a general reluctance to believe that students need remedial work in content-level courses. We have students who don't know if Indianapolis and Chicago are cities or states. How can they be successful in courses in political science, history, sociology, or psychology?" The same department chair is explaining his reluctance, or perhaps more accurately, his refusal, to consider the inclusion of SOC 101 in the pilot learning community. His office has a lived-in look, as if the inhabitant had settled in quite some time ago. He is new to his role as department chair, however, having inherited the position only a few months ago; his predecessor had occupied the chair for more than two decades. He is not, however, new to the teaching of the social sciences, nor is his concern for the needs of students in developmental courses a recent occurrence. He has taught at Parkland College since 1970, and recalls the days when no developmental courses existed on the campus. "There was a resistance to developmental education from the faculty and administration. Some thought it was inappropriate for those students to be here. The counselors thought developmental courses were bad for self-esteem--and elitist."

As a young faculty member, this department chair was instrumental in the development of the 1977 proposal to integrate courses. He describes a lost battle. "The Dean of Instruction said 'no.' It never got to the Curriculum Committee. There were divisional developmental courses in English, Reading, Social Sciences, and Biology offered,[1] but the

[1] Parkland's 1977-78 catalog lists developmental courses in Accounting, English, Reading, and Math, and also for GED preparation, but no courses in Biology nor the Social Sciences.

classes weren't making because the counselors were against it. Some [disciplines] wouldn't participate [in designing developmental courses for their area]." He considers Parkland's current administration to have a "profound" understanding of developmental education. It is his belief that the currently proposed model would be improved by the inclusion of a developmental social science class, or by addressing students' deficits in basic social science concepts through an expansion of either the Orientation course or a Transition to College class.

While opposing the inclusion of SOC 101, he does not oppose the learning community concept. Indeed, he has wondered about ways to fund the program without using up a student's financial aid eligibility. "I couldn't be more supportive. These students have to have intensive intervention. We have not been willing to pay for it. We don't need to research how to do it. Look at any university athletic department, the military, or our Nursing Department. The models exist."

Several task force members expressed sensitivity to these opposing views. Said one, who seemed to have done her homework pretty well, "Some see the learning community as an arrogant attempt. Some perceive that we're throwing all of their past hard work out. Some see it as going against standards they agonized over. (Proponents and opponents) share a common issue: How do we best serve the student?" Another described the experience of her own child, graduating from a university this year without ever writing a paper with footnotes: "The watering-down of curriculum is evident at most schools."

The perspective of the Humanities Department. With the SOC 101 component lost, one task force member agreed to re-design a LIT 120 class, Introduction to Literature, to be integrated into the learning community. His department chair had offered this course as a possibility for the learning community, not reluctantly, but perhaps cautiously. She also

joined the faculty of Parkland in 1970, and has been the Humanities Chair since 1995. She also served on the 1977 committee. To her recollection, a pilot program ran in the spring of 1980, but was not repeated. "We weren't successful getting the students successful" with a model integrating English, reading, and a counseling/orientation component. She would agree with the Social Sciences chair that the upper echelon of the administration at the time would not have considered developmental education an institutional goal. "It's a different climate and time. The college has to answer to more outside bodies now." She goes on to explain that, even without increased external regulation, the current administration has shown strong commitments to the needs of many special populations on campus: women, student-parents, racial minorities, and underprepared students.

Other Developmental Education Committees

For awhile, attempts to integrate courses were shelved. Twelve years ago, in 1988, a college-wide committee proposed establishing a complete unit to address the needs of underprepared students. The unit was to have a director and some combination of coordinators (for recruitment, advisement, assessment, retention, and curriculum development), advisors, student workers, receptionists, and a secretary. The unit was not established. Some of the existing documents suggest that this might have been due to budgetary constraints.

A couple of years later, another college-wide committee developed a proposal addressing the renamed "College Preparatory Education" program at Parkland. By this time, a large number of developmental courses were offered, especially in reading, writing, and mathematics, but also in the social sciences. This particular committee, which had among its members four chairs of academic departments, opposed the establishment of a separate unit

which would "conflict with or supplant the normal authority of department chairs for curriculum and faculty within their jurisdictions" or the authority of faculty "for courses within their subject areas." Organizational divisions were to "remain along subject area lines," and the "sorting" function of the College was to be "strengthened" so that students could be "classified and referred appropriately."[2] The group recommended the organization of a College Preparatory steering committee, which would develop a College Preparatory Advisement Service, to be staffed, ideally, by faculty teaching preparatory courses. These individuals were to be screened, trained, supervised, and compensated for their advising duties. While grant funds in the early 1990s provided brief training to some faculty advisors, there is no College Preparatory Advisement Service at Parkland College. In recent years, academic advising for students in developmental reading courses has been provided predominantly by the college's counselors.

A later committee, which met between 1992 and 1994, tried again to establish a learning community structure. Once again, people with good intentions seemed star-crossed. There were problematic philosophical and stylistic differences among committee members. One of the involved department chairs did not remember to schedule the necessary classes. There was difficulty finding appropriate space. Only five students were identified for a spring "start date"--not enough to warrant the expenditure of resources. While at least one of the committee members was ready to regroup the following fall semester and try again, Ewen was moving on with other ideas. He appointed the Chair of the Math Department as the new Chair of the Developmental Education Committee.

---

[2] The quotations are from a spring 1990 document. There were eight members on the committee. The document was co-authored by the Chair of the Humanities Department at the time, and by the Director of the Learning Laboratory (a center offering individualized instruction to students in reading, writing, mathematics, and basic computer literacy).

Guided Studies

A large committee, perhaps too large, met for at least the next two years. Some members of that group seem to think that the attempts to accommodate the viewpoints of so many individuals led to a watered-down product, a proposal not considered particularly interesting nor progressive by many of its own developers. The proposed product, christened "Guided Studies," had as its unique component a mentoring program, and was scheduled to begin during the Fall 1997 semester. Participating students were to enroll in sections of developmental reading, writing, and orientation. The courses were not integrated. Participants were not necessarily enrolled in the same sections. The students may or may not have elected to enroll in a fourth class; perhaps many of the students would have placed into a developmental mathematics course. In any event, student participants were to be assigned a faculty mentor, with whom they would meet regularly.

Brochures were printed. Counselors, who typically spend much of the summer helping new students with their initial academic planning, presented the Guided Studies option to eligible students. A few students showed interest, but most seemed not to understand how they would benefit from the program. A sub-committee of the Developmental Education Committee worked to hire a coordinator for the program, and developed a strategy for implementation. They presented their recommendations to Ewen.

Quite suddenly, the word was out that Guided Studies was dead in the water. Informational brochures were collected from the Counseling and Advising Centers. Some who had served on the most recent Developmental Education Committee expressed dismay at this end to their work. Others were not surprised, speculating that the upper

administration viewed the product as lackluster, and the plans for coordination and implementation somehow unsatisfactory.

With the exception of the author of this study, task force members were a subset of the committee that developed Guided Studies. The individuals who had participated on that committee, but who were not a part of the task force, were asked by Ewen to serve in an advisory capacity to the task force. As it turned out, assistance from the advisory group was not requested during the Fall of 1997.

Administrative Support

Some task force members and department chairs questioned the likelihood of being able to develop a proposal, gain approval, recruit and enroll students, and begin a pilot project by the following semester. These doubts were based on experience:

> We struggled 15 years to get an English 101 prerequisite to Education 101. It took another 1 1/2 to 2 years more to get this prerequisite for Liberal Arts and Sciences 189.
>
> I chaired the developmental education committee for two years after my sabbatical.
>
> We ran a pilot program in the spring of 1980. A big, college-wide committee had planned it for two years.
>
> The last committee on underprepared students went on for two years.
>
> The current task force is a response to the failure of the last model and the time spent on it--two years.
>
> It seems Guided Studies could have been done by two people in an afternoon, and we met about that for two years.

"Two years" seems to be the modal response to questions about the development phases of earlier programs for underprepared students, programs that rarely progressed to the implementation stage. The faculty planning to team-teach during the learning community's pilot semester, however, all stated that they were ready to implement the program in January,

1998, as requested by Ewen. Although a number of people questioned whether bureaucratic layers might impede a timely implementation, involved parties continued to express optimism. This positive attitude was based on a perception that the upper-level administrators had been kept apprised of the events of the semester and that they were "on-board." Apprehension was kept alive, however, by the veto power observed in the Social Sciences Department, and by various individuals' awareness of the history of similar endeavors.

As it turned out, however, Parkland's administration was eager to support a proposal that showed careful research and consideration of the issues. The task force learned, for example, in meeting with the College's President, Zelema Harris, that her own master's thesis had described the benefits of course integration, group process, and the creation of an intellectual environment for students from minority groups. She valued the concept, having first-hand experience of being a stranger in a strange land as an African-American graduate student in the 1960s, and having worked in the past to structure a scholarly community for disenfranchised students. Ewen also endorsed the proposal, reasonably suggesting that the proposed model could evolve, and that it was important not to "back off" too soon. He hoped, he said, to one day have several learning community structures on the campus. While educational administrators frequently are criticized for taking "bottom line" approaches, Ewen, a mathematician, expressed an interest in softer measures of the effects on students: Will they feel more self-confident? Will they feel more comfortable working with others? "I want students coming out feeling transformed," he said. "I want it reaffirmed that it's okay working in a community--that it's an expectation."

Comprehensive Assessment Program (CAP)

Learning communities for underprepared students, that also include certain

transferable, content-area courses, challenge Parkland College's usual policies and procedures. Similar to many community colleges, Parkland has a committee that has hammered out, and continues to refine, a Comprehensive Assessment Program for entering students. New students are assessed in reading, writing, and mathematics to determine eligibility for certain courses offered at the College. Reading placements, as measured by The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, 2nd ed. (1978) are critical.[3] Prospective students with less than a seventh-grade reading level are referred to Adult Basic Education classes. Students with scores placing them within the seventh- to ninth-grade reading levels are required to enroll in a reading and study skills class called Critical Comprehension Skills (CCS) 098, and are barred from taking any transferable general education courses. Many of the career-oriented courses (as opposed to transferable courses) also require a higher reading placement. Those with tenth- to twelfth-grade reading scores enroll in the mandatory CCS 099.

The task force proposed that a community of learners at the CCS 098 reading level, who also placed into developmental writing courses, enroll in an Introduction to Literature class along with their developmental course work. According to College guidelines, this literature course normally is available only to students who have placed into college-level writing courses.

Implementation Timeline

The learning community described above was piloted during the Spring 1998 semester, and was dubbed "Integrated Studies Community II (ISC II)." (A non-graded, free "Transition to College" class offered on the Parkland campus was considered "ISC I," as

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[3] College personnel ceased using this instrument during the 1999-2000 academic year, determining reading placements, instead, by students' ACT COMPASS scores.

these transition students also enrolled into a community as they worked to develop basic skills.) Students in ISC II were co-enrolled in four courses: a reading and study skills class (CCS 098), a developmental writing course (ENG 098 or 099), orientation to college (ORN 101), and the introductory literature course (LIT 120). Three instructors team-taught, coordinating their syllabi and integrating course content. During the pilot study one instructor assumed responsibility for two of the courses, writing and literature.

The curriculum of the pilot community was offered again during the fall of 1998. A fourth faculty member was added, however, and the literature and English composition components were divided between two instructors. A second community was offered this same semester for students placing at the next higher level of reading, CCS 099. These students also co-registered for four courses: reading and study skills (CCS 099), a developmental writing course (ENG 099), pre-algebra (MAT 094), and Introduction to Psychology (PSY 101). In the regular curriculum, students are not eligible to enroll in PSY 101 until they also are eligible for college-level writing (ENG 101), so this community represented another break from usual college policy. Four instructors also team-taught this learning community.

The ISC II curriculum was repeated in the spring of 1999, although two of the four instructors were different from the fall. ISC III faculty remained unchanged from the fall, but a slightly higher-level mathematics course, Beginning Algebra (MAT 095), was substituted in the spring.

Evaluation Questions

Multiple meetings of the task force, individual interviews with many key stakeholders, and fine-tuning after the pilot phase resulted in the development of the following evaluation questions:

1. How does the persistence/retention rate of Integrated Studies Community (ISC) students compare with similar students in the college's regular curricular structure?

2. What changes are seen in ISC students' adaptation/adjustment to the college environment during the semester? How do they compare with similar students in the regular curriculum?

3. How does the achievement of the ISC students in LIT 120 compare with the achievement of students in a regular LIT 120 class?

4. What are the participating students' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of the learning community structure?

5. What are the perceptions of the participating faculty of the advantages and disadvantages of the learning community structure?

6. What changes are seen in ISC students' reading and writing levels during the semester? How do these compare with similar students in the regular curriculum?

Purpose and Timing of This Study

Other items in the chronology help explain the value of this study at this particular time at Parkland College--and with this population of students. Prior to the appointment of the task force, the upper administration of the college had attended a conference on learning communities. From that conference, an African-American sociology professor from Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold, Maryland, was invited to Parkland to share the successes of learning communities at his institution.[4] Reports on the status of

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[4] Zelema Harris and Dale Ewen hoped that this visit would be the catalyst to the development of a similar program at Parkland. When, instead, they were presented the Guided Studies proposal, they were appreciative of the effort, but disappointed. Harris recalls expressing her frustration during the College's annual Leadership Conference. At

developmental/remedial education were issued by the state's Community College Board and Board of Higher Education. When Ewen disseminated these reports on October 6, 1997, his accompanying memo stated, "As this issue continues to receive even more state-level attention, our efforts to address these issues locally become even more important, not only for our students but also for our professional and institutional integrity." Within the local and state political context, then, the merits of programs for underprepared students are receiving renewed interest.

While some colleges have implemented learning community structures for a number of years, it is less typical to find them implemented with students in developmental reading courses, especially students at the seventh- to ninth-grade reading levels (CCS 098). It is important to learn whether these curricular changes, praised for their benefits for college-level and honors students, can contribute to the retention and academic development of less prepared students.

On the national front, new learning community implementations are springing up coast-to-coast. Evaluations of these initiatives have been infrequent; comprehensive evaluations, so far, are rare. This study employs quantitative and qualitative methods to describe a comprehensive evaluation of the planning, pilot, and full implementation phases of the Integrated Studies Communities for underprepared students at Parkland College.

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least two faculty members in attendance that day were energized by the commitment behind this frustration, and decided to regroup and try again. Their subsequent conversations with Harris and Ewen led to the appointment of the task force.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review first discusses the characteristics and history of learning communities, and how these curricular structures relate to current concerns about student attrition. Next, a number of learning community models and examples are described. Finally, the potential impact of learning communities on various groups within postsecondary education--students, faculty, and administrators--is discussed, providing justification for the evaluation methods selected for this study.

Learning Communities in Postsecondary Education

Smith (1991) offers the following comprehensive definition of "learning community":

> While the term "learning community" often is used loosely, it as a specific connotation: a variety of curricular models that purposefully restructure the curriculum to link together courses or coursework during the same quarter or semester so that a group of students finds greater coherence in what they are studying and experiences increased intellectual interaction with faculty members and other students. In learning communities, students and faculty members experience courses and disciplines as complementary and connected enterprises.
>
> Restructuring efforts around learning communities are guided by assumptions about rethinking organizational practices and structures. They point to a critical need to provide a rich learning environment for students and teachers. Because they recognize the difficulty and the importance of cultivating and empowering the judgment and creativity of teachers and administrators, most restructuring efforts attempt to build a culture of self-renewal partly by decentralizing authority and responsibility.
>
> Learning communities typically involve changes both in structure and in process. Their pedagogy often includes team teaching, interdisciplinary content, integration of skill and content teaching, and active approaches to learning. (p. 42)

While reading about learning communities, it also may be useful to consider the needs of the following individuals. These are fictitious, but their counterparts can be found on today's college campuses:

A prospective college student and his family live in a congested urban area. The educational standards of his high school are low; the crime rate is high. It is his parents' wish to send him to an out-of-town community college away from the discouraging and dangerous influences in his immediate neighborhood.

Another prospective student, recently separated from her spouse, has been a homemaker for the past twenty years. She now must find gainful employment, but lacks the skills. Embarrassed, apologetic, and anxious, she applies at her local community college.

A third student completed high school this spring, along with the other seventy members of her graduating class. She earned a solid "B" average in high school, but is accustomed to a limited curriculum in a homogeneous setting. She has decided to attend a community college and prepare to transfer to a university.

While these three students appear very different on the outside, they share some important traits. All three are underprepared in some way for optimal performance in college, all are likely to be "first-generation" college students (the first generation of their families to attend college), and all three probably are wondering how they will fit into this new academic setting. Imagine that all three of these students end up in the same developmental English class. The professor is a mid-career educator, having taught the same courses at the same community college for more than twenty years. Tenured long ago and considered competent in his field, he nevertheless wonders if he is prepared to handle these diverse students. To him, it seems that over the years the students have entered with more and more problems. The college has grown, and with that growth, the departmental divisions and administrative layers have become more obvious. The increasing numbers of women, minority, and younger faculty are advocating cooperative and collaborative learning, sharing of power, and helping students make a personal connection to their academic work. He recalls the enthusiasm that led him into this field years ago, but finds himself feeling

isolated from his colleagues in other disciplines, and certainly from the younger faculty members joining the ranks.

The Issues and the Debate

Roueche and Roueche (1996), and other developmental education experts in their camp, probably would advise this professor to avoid jumping on new bandwagons, and instead limit choices for these students. They recommend stringent assessments, reduced course loads, no late enrollment periods, mandatory orientation activities and/or classes, and also oppose enrollment in regular academic courses concurrent with basic skills courses. Other educators, however, are advocating the transformation of curriculum as a possible solution to problems in higher education. The opposing groups are responding, no doubt, to many of the same contemporaneous challenges. There is quite a difference, however, between increasing restrictions, and revising the curriculum in an attempt to meet the needs of a changing society.

The Role of Curriculum

McGrath and Spear (1991) systematically outline many student, faculty, institutional, and societal factors impeding student success. As an example, they point out the "weak academic practices" that "subtly exclude nontraditional students" (p. 55) from the academic and professional world. In effect, they are saying that the drudgery of skills acquisition, if not in some way combined with engaging and stimulating material, encourages students to drop out. Because the nontraditional students do not fully understand the requirements of academic and professional communities, they must be "invited and enticed to join and to stay" (p. 79). "Community colleges," write McGrath and Spear, "should be trying to bridge

the gulf of cultural disarticulation . . ." (p. 95). Another sensitive subject broached by the authors is whether or not community college faculty need additional graduate study; the authors question whether faculty "disconnected" (p. 145) from their disciplines can be effective representing these disciplines to nontraditional students. McGrath and Spear suggest that faculty can be reengaged intellectually when they are supported as members of an academic community.

Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews, and Smith (1990) cite numerous reports expressing dismay about the state of postsecondary education in this country. Concerns about faculty include declining status and compensation, decreasing intellectual activity, and increased specialization and isolation. Curricula are described as either too broad or too narrow. The multiple missions of the community college, attempting to meet both vocational and pre-baccalaureate needs, further complicate curricular disputes. The composition of the student body is changing rapidly, and is described as "increasingly adult, part time, commuter, pluralistic, and female" (p. 9). In days past, college students formed a sense of community by dormitory living, late-night study sessions, or passing time in a variety of campus establishments. Many college students, and especially students on commuter campuses, are not educated in this environment, and according to Gabelnick et al., "the curriculum must now assume responsibilities for building community formerly assumed by the college as a whole" (p. 10).

Cross (1998) reminds us that "the learning of a novice . . . is labored and slow, not because the novice is less intelligent than the expert or even less motivated, but because connections between new information and existing schemata are sparse" (p. 13). She discusses the value of learning communities in constructing knowledge and in increasing student involvement. Greater involvement is seen as leading to higher retention rates, greater

personal satisfaction and achievement, and increased participation in further learning opportunities. Similar to Gabelnick et al. (1990), Cross (1998) emphasizes the significance of this for community colleges, which because of their nonresidential status, do not have all of the ways of involving students that are available to residential colleges.

O'Banion (1997) focuses on the need for community colleges to become "learning colleges" (p. 15) and break away from time-bound, place-bound, role-bound, and bureaucracy-bound limitations. His views are in accord with Cross (1998). "Innovations can now be understood," he writes, "as the struggles of creative faculty and administrators to change the historical architecture of education that acts as a barrier to change" (p. 27). Learning communities are examples of structures, he suggests, that support student learning by breaking through these barriers.

As a response to the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges report, "Building Communities: A Vision for a New Century," Armes and McClenney (1990) prepared a checklist to assist community colleges in determining which of their practices help or hinder community-building. They emphasize the relationship of the institution to its community, the relationship among courses and programs, the relationships among people across the institution, the effectiveness of the core curriculum, and the effectiveness of across-the-curriculum initiatives. They insist that the following programs be ongoing, institutionalized efforts: interdisciplinary courses and programs, team teaching, and collaborative/cooperative learning ventures in place of competitive activity.

Richardson (1990) describes various types of underprepared learners, and frequent barriers to their admission and success. While he supports attempts to remediate these students' academic difficulties prior to their college enrollment, he opposes the exclusion of high-risk students or redefining outcomes for them. He believes that the "only alternative"

(p. 18) likely to bring about long-term improvement is the provision of a more supportive learning environment that builds on student strengths rather than focusing on their weaknesses, and which increases student-faculty interaction.

Three of the 10 recommendations for teaching high-risk college students, made by Stahl, Simpson, and Hayes (1992), who are teachers of college reading courses for this population of students, relate to most learning community models. Stahl et al., in agreement with Richardson (1990) recommend that teachers adopt a cognitive-based, rather than a deficit-based philosophy. They suggest that the deficit-based models stigmatize and demoralize college students. Further, they recommend that students in developmental courses also should be enrolled in a paired, credit-bearing, content area course, and that writing should be incorporated into the curriculum.

Student Attrition

Tinto (1996) has written extensively about learning communities and student persistence in college. While academic difficulty typically is the source of involuntary attrition, he identifies seven other sources of voluntary attrition: (a) adjustment problems to required academic and social changes; (b) career or personal goals which are either unclear, incompatible with the institution, or changed; (c) uncertainty, in that the student is making no movement toward goal clarity (Tinto points out the need for counselors and professional advisors, rather than faculty advisors, to work with these students, as a solid grasp of student development issues is crucial); (d) finances, referring to either a lack of funds or the student's perception of the costs and benefits; (e) commitments, referring to the student's internal commitment to this educational venture and to the demands of outside commitments; (f)

congruence, defined as the outcome of the quality of the student's interaction with others at the college; and (g) isolation, the absence of either social or intellectual interaction.

Tinto (1996) cites statistics from his earlier research suggesting that the bulk of student attrition occurs during the first year of college study, that almost half of beginning community college students leave before their second year (although some of these students are transferring to other schools), and that most colleges lose at least two-thirds of their beginning full-time students. He asserts that students who persist have established "competent membership in a community" (p. 102), an academic community at least, if not a social one, too. Establishing learning community structures is one of his recommendations.

Tinto (1998) summarizes his and others' research on student persistence, adding further support to the views expressed by McGrath and Spear (1991), Cross (1998), and O'Banion (1997). He counters earlier research that reported academic integration was not central to persistence at community colleges. The earlier research, he suggests, noted that academic integration was not happening, but did not take into account how it could happen. Tinto makes two general recommendations if we take the "research on student persistence seriously" (p. 167): reorganize the curriculum into learning communities to allow students to "share learning across the curriculum" (p. 170); and reorganize classrooms to promote collaborative learning so that "students learn together rather than apart" (p. 170). Tinto frequently has written of the need to get students involved and acclimated to the norms of citizenship. He extends his ideas to the bureaucratic structures on campuses as well, recognizing the need to have academic and student service units working cooperatively.

Rendón (1994) also reports that students are more likely to persist in college if they are helped to do three things: negotiate the transition to college; become involved in campus academic and social life; and develop positive attitudes about their learning abilities. She states that colleges must create "validating" (p. 6) academic and social communities, through

collaborative learning in a supportive classroom environment, and through the building of a sensitive, hospitable campus climate outside of class.

Learning communities are seen as ways to address both academic and social issues. Nontraditional students can be presented a more meaningful curriculum through the integration of basic skills courses and content-area courses. Because students have more access to their instructors and to their peers, there are increased opportunities to experience how knowledge is constructed in a scholarly community. While there are challenges to students, who often are growing out of intellectually naive, dualistic thinking, it all occurs in a supportive community.

History of the Learning Community Concept

Gabelnick et al. (1990) consider Alexander Meiklejohn, philosopher and educational theorist, to be the father of the learning community movement. Meiklejohn, writing in the 1920s, expressed concern about the increasing specialization, fragmentation, and isolation in American colleges and universities. He wrote, as many have written since, that the educational system should prepare students to live responsibly in a democratic society, and he believed that the general education curriculum was the means to this. Between the years 1927-1932, Meiklejohn's ideal college curriculum was implemented at the University of Wisconsin Experimental College. This ambitious learning community was a full-time, two-year, lower-division program with a thematic focus, democracy in ancient Athens and contemporary America, and involved "the great books" as points of future-oriented discussion. Meiklejohn did not support an elective system, in which students are permitted choices of what to study, believing that this was the result of faculty lacking vision and

shirking responsibility. Meiklejohn is remembered particularly for his observations about the importance of structure, curricular coherence, and community.

Tussman's study, Experiment at Berkeley, as cited in Gabelnick et al. (1990), is based on Meiklejohn's earlier work. Tussman, a former student of Meiklejohn, conceptualized the lower-division curriculum, as opposed to an individual course, as the basic curricular unit. A curricular structure that was a program, rather than an individual course, required a faculty community, as no program could be taught meaningfully from the perspective of only one discipline. Tussman's learning community, similar to Meiklejohn's, ran only from 1965 to 1969 and was not able to sustain broad institutional support, but his ideas were adopted the following year by The Evergreen State College, a newly-founded college in the state of Washington. Evergreen began with year-long, interdisciplinary learning communities called "coordinated studies programs," and has continued with this curricular structure through today.

Dewey (as cited in Gabelnick et al., 1990) is viewed as another influential figure in the history of the learning community. Although not so concerned with structure, Dewey envisioned a close working relationship between student and teacher, based on an assumption of "shared inquiry." Like Meiklejohn, he was concerned about the correlation between effective education and democracy, and believed cooperative and collaborative learning to be key.

Gabelnick et al. (1990) and Smith (1991) point out that learning communities share common ground with recent writings in many fields: the social construction of knowledge, collaborative learning, writing and critical thinking, feminist pedagogy, and cognitive and intellectual development. Some of this common ground may become clearer in a discussion of the characteristics of learning communities.

Smith (1991) explains that learning communities combine the philosophies of experiential learning, student-centered instruction, cooperative-collaborative learning, and small-group theories. She uses her experience with learning communities in 23 of the 27 community colleges (now 27 of 27, according to MacGregor, 1999) in the state of Washington as evidence for how they work: by providing a "complex, educationally sound, and practical solution to a complicated set of educational issues" (p. 45). The issues she addresses include curricular coherence for students, faculty development, including the integration of new and veteran faculty, and various "people issues," such as isolation. She recommends that institutions identify their critical issues, and at least question if curricular restructuring is a possible solution.

Tinto, Russo, and Kadel-Taras (1996), in their qualitative research with Seattle Central Community College's Coordinated Studies Program, found that participating students believed that the diversity in their classroom helped them learn not only about different people, but also more about course content. From data collected by observations, interviews, and informal conversations, the authors concluded that increased content was learned due to increased student involvement inherent in active learning, and to peer support. This constructivist notion of how knowledge is created is mentioned repeatedly in the literature on learning communities. Tinto et al. use the word "obligation" (p. 140) to describe a college's responsibility in involving students in their own learning. They suggest "rethinking" institutional bureaucracies that propagate and emphasize divisions between subjects and disciplines, the separation of student and academic affairs, and competitive settings. Instead, they recommend adopting a "community-based model" (p. 140) of education.

Gabelnick (1997) thinks globally as she writes of the benefits of learning community structures:

> The challenge of educating a committed citizenry is to change the societal and university paradigm from a strategy of competitiveness to one of collaboration, from a perspective of scarcity to one of sufficiency and inclusion, and from a stance that looks for expedient solutions to one that engages and commits to a series of values and a way of life. (p. 30)

While emphasizing the collaborative learning experiences, construction of knowledge, development of leadership skills, and higher retention rates, Gabelnick (1997) also mentions that ideas of social justice, community responsibility, and respect for difference are embedded in the curriculum. Gabelnick's recent work adds a service learning component to learning communities and other college curricula.

These political tones are evident in many of the writings on learning communities. Concerns are expressed for faculty teaching in environments having barriers to intellectual innovation. Under particular attack, however, are curricula and settings seeming to allow the advancement of certain groups of students over others. A key component, then, of most learning communities is a high proportion of collaborative and cooperative learning activities in the classroom, activities which are believed to benefit all students.

Collaborative Learning

Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1994) identify five essential components of collaborative or cooperative learning: positive interdependence, promotive interaction (in which students facilitate each other's success), individual accountability, interpersonal and small-group skills, and group processing. They cite their own 1989 meta-analysis, which suggests significantly higher achievement and retention results from cooperative learning

when compared with the competitive or individualistic learning often seen in American classrooms.

Coelho (1994) further explains that individualism and self-determination are values of the majority culture in American society, but that many minority groups are more comfortable and familiar with group, family, and community goals. While the competitive ethic rewards and motivates many high-achieving students, it has not been found to be as effective with many minority and immigrant groups. According to Coelho much research suggests that cooperative learning activities yield positive learning effects for all students; certainly, equalizing the status of students, peer assistance, peer approval, and diverse, student-directed activities have been shown to create a more stimulating environment for many African-American students. Informal, student-organized study groups frequently are spawned in collaborative classrooms, which may explain some of the positive effects seen. Studies of cooperative learning environments indicate that participating students have greater self-esteem, a sense of belonging, and improved attendance. Further, students report liking their classmates, teacher, and subject matter better.

Slavin (1983) is another researcher supporting the idea that cooperative learning is more productive than competition or individualization. He states that students' motivation is affected strongly by their perception that their peers want them to succeed; in competitive settings, peers frequently express norms against excelling academically. His 1983 meta-analysis was done with cooperative learning studies in the elementary and secondary schools, but suggests that academic achievement is increased most when there are group rewards along with individual accountability. Slavin states further that, even if no academic gains had been shown, these learning methods are justified by "strong, consistent positive effects"

(p. 431) on race relations, attitudes toward academically handicapped classmates, self-esteem, and the predisposition to cooperate in other settings.

Two recent unpublished doctoral dissertations describe the use of collaborative learning in learning community environments. Lawrence (1996) conducted conversational interviews and focus group discussions to explore the co-creation of knowledge and the instructors' attention to group dynamics in a cohort of 29 adult learners at Northern Illinois University. Lindblad (1995), in a qualitative cross-case study (using interviews, observations, and document reviews) of three collaborative learning communities (community college, public university, and private university), focuses on the theory and pedagogy behind competition, cooperation, and collaboration. She describes these as representing "gradations of intellectual and social development." She reiterates how collaborative learning is "democracy in action" and the "pedagogy of citizenship."

Readers interested in collaborative learning are referred to Goodsell, Maher, Tinto, Smith, and MacGregor (1992), and to Kadel and Keehner (1994). These two sourcebooks present concise articles by many active scholars in the field, and list numerous schools, programs, and contact people who are implementing collaborative learning activities. While writers endorsing learning communities and collaborative learning clearly believe that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, some educators have described successes using only portions of the model.

Separate Components of Learning Communities and Their Effects

Stone (1990) revised a study skills course for underprepared freshmen, combining instruction in critical thinking, reading, and writing with unified course content, in this case, the topic of alcohol use and abuse on college campuses. Although this was an individual

class, she reports higher attendance, fewer failures, and better language facility than students in previous semesters. Stone found that the modification of this single class changed both the students' and her roles, by helping students move out of their dualistic thinking, and teaching much about how to work in a community of scholars.

Schatzberg-Smith (1988) found improved study habits and attitudes among underprepared community college students after incorporating back-and-forth journal writing between student and professor. She attributes this to the students' increased involvement with faculty, which seemed to lead to students' increased awareness of and control over their academic behavior.

Semke and Semke (1983) took 20 students reading below college-level, dividing them into two groups. One group received remedial reading instruction, while the other group was enrolled in a beginning German class. The German section participated in relaxation exercises at the beginning of each class, but received no remedial reading instruction. Although both groups raised their reading scores after one semester, the students enrolled in German had better attendance, no academic dismissals, and a higher retention rate at the end of their fourth semester. Semke and Semke speculate that the students' performance was related to learning in a relaxed setting, and also to a higher self-concept as a result of being enrolled in, and succeeding in, a "difficult" content-area class.

Explaining that it is the college's job to "train citizens," Newell (1983, p. 248) believes that all freshman introductory courses should be taught as interdisciplinary courses. He asserts that not all questions can be answered satisfactorily by one discipline area, that faculty need the intellectual revitalization of interdisciplinary learning and teaching, and that students can make more informed choices of majors through this approach.

While the effects of individual components--integrating content into skills courses, increasing interaction with instructors, allowing students more challenging material, including collaborative learning techniques--are promising, the chief characteristic of a learning community is the intentional formation of a scholarly community of students and instructors, who learn "in community" with each other. This community can take many forms.

Learning Community Models

Certain models of learning communities make better sense at one institution over another. Models vary in the number of courses that are linked. The intensity of course integration, and the amount of team-teaching, might differ. Some communities are organized around thematic interest areas, or around pre-major themes. While some models can be implemented at large institutions, others are more workable for smaller schools. Some models are valued for their faculty development benefits, but also might be costly. It may be useful to keep these variations in mind while reading about the diverse models.

Agreement about the number of types of learning community models probably does not exist. Nevertheless, the following types are found in one combination or another in Gabelnick et al. (1990), Matthews (1994), and Smith (1991) (see Table 1).

Linked Courses

A linked-course learning community involves a pairing of courses. The two courses are listed in the class schedule so that a cohort of students co-registers for them. Although the two involved faculty members typically teach the courses individually, the syllabi are coordinated to some extent. The most common pairings seem to involve a writing course

with a content area course, although developmental programs often pair a reading course with a content area course.

Table 1

Learning Community Models

Models	Number of linked courses	Course integration	Team-teaching	Size of institution	Unique features
Linked courses	2	Yes	Yes or No	Any	Usually includes a writing course
Learning clusters	3 to 4	Yes	Yes or No	Any	Usually clustered around a theme
Freshman Interest Groups (FIGs)	3	No	No	Large	Pre-major themes; peer advising; 25-student cohort co-registers for larger classes
Federated Learning Communities (FLCs)	3	Yes (via Master Learner)	No	Large	Thematically-linked courses; 40-student cohort co-registers for larger classes; Master Learner seminar
Coordinated Studies Program (CSPs)	3 to 5	Yes	Yes	Any	Full-time, interdisciplinary, team-taught study; absence of traditional 50 class; 1:20 faculty-student ratio; frequent thematic links

Gudan (1994) describes the pairing of a developmental reading course with an introductory psychology class at Schoolcraft College near Detroit. Although students in these paired classes are reported to have earned higher mean final grades, to have a lower withdrawal rate, and to have increased motivation and learning strategy use, they are compared with a control group that received no reading instruction.

Project Success (1995) at Grossmont College initially linked English and reading courses. Participating students demonstrated the completion of more semester units, a higher semester grade point average, a lower withdrawal rate, and a slightly higher persistence rate. Also, they transitioned to a higher-level English course at a higher rate and, once there, had a higher success rate than students who had not been in the learning community structure.

Grossmont went on to add basic mathematics and speech courses to the link. They recommend systematic orientations to similar programs, and clear counseling and advising. Also, they caution others to tend to any frustrating aspects of their registration process.

Wishner (1991), an English teacher at Solano Community College, reports links at her school between English and either Biology, History, or Human Development. She believes that the links have led to students' increased association between reading, writing, and content areas, faculty development and rejuvenation, and a reluctance among students to drop linked courses. Although not team-taught initially, this component was added after learning that the burden of linking and associating course content was falling on the English teachers. Wishner also emphasized the importance of counselors in the success of the classes; because the counselors at her school are the primary contacts for students planning schedules, they were able to help students choose links of interest and to understand the demands of interdisciplinary work.

The state of Washington appears at the forefront of most learning community activities. Gabelnick et al. (1990) cite the Interdisciplinary Writing Program at the University of Washington, and various team-taught links between English composition and other courses at Shoreline Community College in Seattle, as other examples of the linked course model.

At a recent international learning community conference in Tampa (Creating and Sustaining Learning Communities: Connections, Collaboration, and Crossing Borders, 1999, March), the proliferation of linked course implementations was evident. Demers, Kakareka, Everham, Sullivan, McDonald, and Tolley (1999, March) represented several links at Florida Gulf Coast University, an institution founded in the fall of 1997, enrolling 3300 students, and devoid of traditional departmental divisions. Examples of their curricular

innovations include the following: an eight credit-hour integration of biology and chemistry with both faculty members present at all times; a team-taught course in environmental literature, exploring models and metaphors used in scientific and literary writing (i.e., anthrocentric versus ecocentric views in different cultures); and archaeology linked with ecosystem monitoring and research, courses taught separately but with joint field sessions.

Dardis and Muller (1999, March), from Southeastern Louisiana University, described a year-long program for freshman elementary education majors, linking two semesters of biology with college algebra and statistics. Winner-White and Shields (1999, March), doctoral students at Indiana University of Pennsylvania , linked the content of an introductory criminal justice course with a skills-based English composition class. Trautmann, Boes, and Trujillo (1999, March), faculty members at Northampton Community College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, have tried linking both English composition and a developmental reading course with an introductory sociology course. At Iowa State University, Burnett, Polito, Roberts, Schafer, and Zeleznik (1999, March) had students work with an external farmer client as they linked English composition with an agriculture (soil, fertilizer, and water management) course, in an effort to develop students' report and proposal writing skills.

Some universities, such as the University of Central Florida, the University of South Florida, Indiana State University, and Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, are developing links for substantial portions of their lower-division general education offerings. Concerned about high student attrition, some of these schools have attracted significant outside funding to restructure curricula (from the Lilly Foundation in the case of the Indiana schools mentioned, and from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education [FIPSE] for USF).

It seems, then, that linked-course learning communities frequently, but certainly not always, pair a writing course with a content-area course. Links may or may not include team-teaching as a component, but some level of syllabus coordination is important. Costs will vary depending on the degree of team-teaching, but one also must consider the possible benefits of increased student retention in calculating the debit-credit columns. The next model takes us one step further.

Learning Clusters

Learning clusters are an extension of the linked course model, but group three or four courses during a given quarter, semester, or year. Similar to the linked course model, courses are listed in the class schedule so that a cohort group co-registers for the entire cluster. Faculty members integrate the courses and coordinate their syllabi to differing degrees at different institutions. Very often, the courses are clustered around a theme.

Eanes (1992) reports on a cluster of developmental reading and English along with a general education humanities course at St. Edward's University. At the end of one semester, the developmental students were compared with their non-developmental classmates on exam grades, grade point average, and final course grades. Developmental students completed the humanities course with grades of C or better, sometimes performing as well as the non-developmental students. Eanes, in agreement with Richardson (1990) and Stahl et al. (1992), discusses developing this program from a cognitive-based rather than a deficit model. While student mentors and instructors were used to model skills, Eanes does not address the community-building aspect of the cluster. The results are presented as good news for schools with open enrollment policies.

Eanes and Tutchings (1990) had written earlier about a cluster at St. Edward's, linking developmental reading and English with a general education biology course. Although students in the linked courses earned more credit hours and higher grade point averages than either developmental or non-developmental students in non-linked courses, the authors state that the real goals of the program include improved transferability of skills, increased motivation, and improved critical thinking. They theorize that attitude and motivation were important variables in these students' success and their "one of the best ever" (p. 9) retention rate.

Gammill, Hansen, and Tinkler (1992) used a cluster model to link two skills courses, introductory computer skills and library science, with one content course, introductory economics, at Weber State University in Utah. The authors offered the cluster to entering freshmen, believing it would give a realistic introduction to university work. Entering freshmen in the cluster performed as well as more advanced students in traditional, non-linked classes. Students reported that their learning was enhanced and that the cluster was a supportive transition to college. Faculty reported enjoying experimenting with new teaching methods and learning from their colleagues. Students were able to observe the cross-disciplinary intellectual activity of their professors, and to experience the connections among the disciplines.

Thematic clusters are reported in Gabelnick et al. (1990) in Western Michigan University's Honors College Program and at LaGuardia Community College in New York City. Also, a program at Babson College clustering liberal arts and communications courses with business-related courses is described.

While this model does not mandate team-teaching, it seems that most published examples illustrate the value of three to four cross-disciplinary faculty members modeling

scholarly discourse. The next model to be discussed also links courses by theme, but does not include integration by faculty nor coordinated syllabi.

Freshman Interest Groups (FIGs)

Freshman Interest Groups are particularly easy to implement in large institutions, typically defined in the literature as public research universities. FIGs thematically link three pre-major courses, for which students co-register, and also include a peer advising component. Approximately 25 students in a FIG cohort actually make up a subset that travels together to larger classes. FIGs are valued for their low cost and for their ability to give new freshmen in large schools an immediate support system. Historically, FIGs have not been faculty-driven, and faculty members have not been expected to coordinate syllabi and integrate content. Instead, FIGs have been developed by student service officers for the purpose of building social and academic community among new students. Originating at the University of Oregon, FIGs there revolve around themes such as Pre-Law, Pre-Health Sciences, Art and Architecture, and Journalism-Communications.

A qualitative case study of FIGs at the University of Washington was conducted by Tinto and Goodsell (1993). FIGs were praised by students and researchers for offering a consistent set of peers. These peers met social needs, but not at the expense of academic needs. Students met others with similar interests, there was peer pressure to attend class, students felt less anonymous on their large campus, and connections for study groups occurred naturally. Weekly one-hour meetings with an upper-division peer advisor allowed students to ask questions about academic or personal areas of concern. The authors point out that, while FIGs are excellent beginning points, the model at the University of Washington does not address the need for increased faculty-student interaction.

FIGs are low-cost structures that seem to be effective in building communities in large institutions, but neglect the research indicating that retention of students is aided by increasing student-teacher interaction. An attempt to remediate this deficit is described in the next model.

Federated Learning Communities (FLCs)

Federated Learning Communities also are appropriate structures within large schools. Like the Freshman Interest Group model, FLCs thematically link three courses and co-register a cohort group of up to 40 students, who again travel as a subset to larger classes. Students also register, however, for an additional three credit-hour seminar, which is designed to integrate the material from the other three classes, and is led by a Master Learner. The Master Learner is a faculty member who comes from a discipline outside of the federated courses. She or he is expected to attend classes, fulfill student obligations, and learn along with the students. By virtue of his or her training and experience, however, the Master Learner is prepared to assist students with integration of material, and to give invaluable feedback to teaching colleagues, who often feel isolated in large colleges and research universities.

Although FLCs are valued for their faculty development benefits, the cost of giving release time for a faculty member to become a Master Learner is considerable. The State University of New York at Stony Brook implements the FLC model as described, but other schools have sought lower-cost versions. The Honors Program at the University of Maryland recruits an exceptional high school teacher on sabbatical to serve as the Master Learner. Stockton State College omits the Master Learner component, but increases seminar time, led by at least two of the three federated faculty members, within the federated classes themselves.

FLCs appear to be useful curricular structures for building academic and social communities on large campuses. Their advantage over the FIG model is the attention given to helping students make meaning out of complex academic material, and of course, to increasing student-teacher contact. The chief complaints are related to cost. The options with lower price tags still seem beneficial to students, but may minimize the faculty rejuvenation effects of the original Master Learner model. The fifth model to be described incorporates all of the characteristics typically attributed to learning communities.

Coordinated Studies

Coordinated Studies Programs (CSPs) involve full-time, interdisciplinary, team-taught study. The traditional, fixed 50-minute class schedule does not apply. They are the closest descendants of the Meiklejohn and Tussman learning communities discussed earlier. Usually the faculty to student ratio is approximately one to twenty. Students register for the full-time package, but credit typically is awarded for component courses. CSPs might be organized around skills-oriented courses, or might be more thematic. Most CSPs include "book seminars," a derivative of Meiklejohn's use of "great books" as points of departure for discussions. Faculty in CSPs also typically schedule weekly seminars for cross-disciplinary intellectual exchanges with their co-teachers.

Geteles (1987) speculated that coordinated programming lasting only one semester is not long enough. Starting before 1980, she collected the following data on students in coordinated programming: percentage of courses passed, number of credits earned toward a college degree, grade point average, and persistence/retention. Coordinated programs including skills instruction related to a student's major (pre-nursing, pre-science/engineering) seemed to yield the best results.

Johnson (1995) describes the First Year Alternative Experience (FYAE) program at the University of Southern Maine, which links developmental courses for underprepared freshmen. She reports a retention rate of 82.7%, and contrasts this with a reported national average of 66% for first-year undergraduates. Although the study employed no control group, Johnson reports that FYAE students had increased self-confidence, expected more of themselves, developed close personal relationships with other FYAE students, enjoyed support from faculty and staff, and developed a feeling of community. Those students who expressed reservations about the program reported feeling "different" from other students not in the program, and felt that more elective courses should be offered to FYAE students.

The STAR (Students and Teachers Achieving Results) program at Long Beach City College is a coordinated studies program with the theme, "Basic Skills" (Mackay, Abbott, Bundy, Ogimachi, Miller, & Waechter, 1996). Initial participants included 24 "at-risk" students, whose selection was based on low scores on reading and writing assessments. Student participants were from various ethnic minority groups, but were primarily African-American. The authors report having evaluated the program using pre- and post-measures, and "formative and summative evaluation" (p. 12). Mackay et al. report significant improvements in students' reading and writing skills, advancement, retention, and self-esteem. The coordination between different units on campus, and the feeling of community developed in the program, reportedly energized both student and faculty participants.

An unpublished doctoral dissertation by Russo (1995) describes a qualitative study, using observations and interviews, of the CSPs at Urban Central Community College. Russo uses the study as an example of how the CSP model combines the learning community structure, the interdisciplinary approach, and the collaborative learning process.

Scott (1987) includes in his resource book a description of an interdisciplinary block of courses for developmental students at South Mountain Community College in Phoenix, Arizona. In this particular CSP, students enroll in 13 credit hours, including reading, English, study skills, counseling, and a music humanities elective.

The Coordinated Studies Program at Seattle Central Community College is discussed again by Tinto, Russo, and Kadel (1994) as an example of how these learning communities bridge the "academic/social divide" (p. 28) found in community colleges. While acknowledging the value of the academic gains and increased retention seen with this program, Tinto et al.'s emphasis in this article is on the importance of helping students learn how knowledge is constructed, an educational norm seen as a precursor to the norms of democratic citizenry. Again, Tinto et al. encourage institutions to take a hard look at organizational structures, such as rigidly divided subjects and disciplines, that are barriers to students getting involved in their education. An interesting warning about developing learning community structures is noted: It took Seattle Central ten years to design and integrate these curricular structures into their regular curriculum.

Finally, an established coordinated studies program, QUANTA, at Daytona Beach Community College (DBCC), thematically links psychology, English, and a humanities course. Their longitudinal study of data collected from 1985 to 1991 indicates an annual mean retention rate of 93% for QUANTA students (Matthews, 1994). QUANTA is unusual, in that two of the three original instructors still are team-teaching after 16 years (Avens & Zelley, 1999, March). They speculate that they avoid burnout by continuing to develop fun, cross-disciplinary, collaborative assignments, an admittedly labor-intensive yet energizing process. DBCC, it should be noted, employs linked and clustered models on its campus, in addition to the QUANTA program.

Because of the challenges to traditional ways of scheduling classes, and because of the costs of faculty receiving stipends or "load credit" for team-teaching, Coordinated Studies Programs exist only with strong administrative support. This also is likely to be true for Federated Learning Community models employing a Master Learner component. Freshman Interest Groups generally require less financial support, relying on students to form natural alliances with each other. Thematic clusters and other linked-course models vary considerably in resources needed, depending upon the levels of integration, coordination, and team-teaching employed. In order to justify the costs of learning community structures, one needs a clear understanding of the experiences of those who participate: students, faculty, and administrators.

The Student Experience in a Learning Community

Matthews (1986, 1994) summarizes much of what has been suggested in previous sections of this paper. Learning community structures assist students with their transition into the academic and social communities in postsecondary education. She cites a study by Gary Tollefson which identified four ways, according to faculty (apparently in the state of Washington), that learning communities enriched their community colleges' general education offerings: by providing students more opportunities for writing and speaking, by encouraging a more complex world view, by encouraging higher-order thinking skills, and by offering more coherent general education course work. Schools in the state of Washington have been very active in the development of learning communities, and an abundance of data has been collected through the Washington Center for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education at Evergreen State College. The conclusion of several surveys by the Center is that students in learning communities are typical college students, but their retention and

achievement levels, especially in community colleges, are significantly higher than peers in regular college classes.

Gabelnick et al. (1990) also cite the noteworthy retention rates of students in learning communities at numerous universities and community colleges. They go on to discuss the higher mean grade point averages of students in learning communities compared with students in the general population. Perhaps most interesting of all, the authors discuss several studies employing the Measure of Intellectual Development (MID), an essay-writing test designed to measure intellectual development along a continuum described by William Perry (as cited in Gabelnick et al.). Perry identifies three stages of intellectual development: (a) Dualism, the stage in which most students begin college, and in which students see the world in absolute terms, and the teacher as the authority and source of the truth; (b) Multiplicity, in which students recognize that there are multiple perspectives, and that teachers provide methods for how to think, not what to think; and (c) Contextual Relativism, in which students accept the ambiguities of a complex world, recognizing that there are multiple answers to questions, but that some answers are better than others. Students in learning communities have been shown to make dramatic leaps in intellectual development along this continuum during their learning community experience.

Qualitatively, students in learning communities report valuing new friendships and a sense of belonging, something that often is missing for commuter students, in particular. Gabelnick et al. (1990) also list the following positive effects: the benefits of learning collaboratively, increased intellectual energy and confidence, an appreciation of multiple students' perspectives, an appreciation of texts and their authors, building intellectual connections by drawing meaning from several courses, an appreciation of complexity and the

abandonment of intellectual innocence, and the discovery and definition of self in a supportive environment.

It should be noted that Gabelnick et al. (1990) also list potential difficulties for students in learning communities. Some students find the demands of interdisciplinary work excessive. Others are confused by the push to move out of dualistic thinking. Because collaborative, interactive learning requires active participation, reticent students sometimes are uncomfortable. Also, some students represent cultures in which they have been taught to defer to teachers as authority figures.

Romano and Garfield (1980) discuss one other difficulty. They suspected that the support given to underprepared minority students in the University of Minnesota's Pilot Educational Packages should have been extended longer than one quarter. Motivational problems were evident, however, in students who felt "held back" and who wanted to take more "transferable" courses. The authors suggest the possibility of altering credit, timing, or sequencing to incorporate skills courses into existing "regular" courses.

Tinto and Russo (1994) remain enthusiastic in their support of learning communities, especially for the nonresidential campus educating students who are older, employed, and who have multiple obligations. Even with this population, exemplified again by students in programs at Seattle Central Community College, researchers noted higher levels of academic and social activities, more positive views of the college, fellow students, faculty, their classes, the campus climate, and their own involvement, and also higher levels of persistence into the next semester. Further, students reported spending more time studying, and enjoying learning more.

Again, the reported academic and social benefits appear to provide compelling evidence to support learning community structures, especially if these measures correspond

to increased student retention, and persistence to a degree or to marketable job skills. Because the students are a part of a scholarly community, however, it also is important to consider the experiences of their fellow scholars, the faculty.

The Faculty Experience in a Learning Community

Prominent voices in the learning community field describe how these curricular structures connect and "contextualize" the various disciplines, strengthening the teacher-student bond, and forcing both students and faculty to develop personal points of view about the issues being discussed (Gabelnick et al., 1990; Matthews, 1986, 1994; Smith, 1991). Smith explains that learning communities can "rekindle the creative side of teaching . . . they turn everyone into a learner again . . . [in a] climate of growth, trust, permission, and personal responsibility--key elements in self renewal" (p. 46). She believes that learning communities are a curricular reform more likely to work than others, because they are, ideally, the result of the creative processes of interested faculty, and not the result of a curriculum committee's political negotiation. Also, while traditional organizational structures within educational institutions do little or nothing to encourage or facilitate mutual support among faculty, learning communities have been shown to help teachers avoid intellectual and pedagogical isolation. Teachers who participate in learning communities seem more likely to discuss and experiment with new teaching practices. Collaborative, active learning takes place as students and cross-disciplinary instructors make meaning together. Smith quotes Joseph Tussman, in discussing the frustration of teachers working in traditional course-based curricula, as saying, "The student presents himself to the teacher in fragments and not even the advising system can put him together again . . . to pursue one

thread is to drop another . . . [the student] seldom experiences the delight of sustained conversations" (p. 47).

Because one of the chief goals of learning communities is that students learn how knowledge is constructed, faculty members are cautioned not to overplan, but to keep elements of their community somewhat plastic. According to Gabelnick et al. (1990), overplanning is a common mistake among teachers participating in their first learning community and wishing to "measure up" with their colleagues. An unfortunate side-effect of such overplanning is that faculty might decide that the time demands are excessive, and abandon their learning community participation. Although initial planning of any new educational endeavor is time-consuming, those who persist often find themselves energized in an environment in which responsibility for sharing ideas, completing assignments, and attendance is shared by both student and faculty "citizens." Group processes also do much of the work toward facilitating a community of mutual support, tolerance and inclusion.

Smith (1991) discusses one other important benefit for faculty members in learning communities. Many colleges are concerned about preserving or building a campus culture during a time of unprecedented faculty turnover. Team teaching between veteran and newer faculty members can help bridge gaps between these groups, allowing veterans to pass along the wisdom of their years, and allowing new faculty to share their fresh perspectives and recent training. With all of the divisions, departments, and layers of bureaucracy existing on most college campuses, the natural sharing and mentoring which takes place in learning communities, between disciplines and between generations, can be a boon to faculty and administrators alike.

Predictably, successful learning communities require a high level of faculty endorsement, along with a broad base of support from administrators, counselors, and registration personnel. From the beginning, they are an institution-wide community-building experience. A plan for how best to begin will vary somewhat with the idiosyncrasies of the individual institution. While faculty-initiated communities are desirable, strong administrative support is essential. While it is preferable to begin with the most competent faculty members, it also is crucial to avoid the impression of designing an elitist faculty "in-group" (Matthews, 1994, p. 196). Also, while innovators typically are enthusiastic participants in building learning communities, faculty members perceived as primarily advancing their own political agendas have difficulty building broad support (Gabelnick et al., 1990). It seems reasonable to assume that dedicated part-time faculty members can participate as well as full-time teachers. What is important is that the instructors endorse the learning community model, respect each other, and want to work together. Differences in style and approach can be advantages.

The necessity of strong administrative support cannot be overstated. Administrators must believe that learning communities help meet the diverse needs of their particular institution's students. A permanent place in the organizational structure, or an "administrative home" (Gabelnick et al., 1990, p. 41), quickly becomes necessary, and at best, is a partnership of administrators and faculty. Gabelnick et al. describe the quick success of learning communities at Western Michigan University once administrative support was given; however, this followed a 10-year uphill struggle by the developers. Clear expectations about faculty loads and enrollment must be expressed, and contingency plans

developed. Time must be allotted for planning, recruiting, and marketing. Faculty members, who have worked hard to plan and improve a community, need assurance that they will be able to offer their link or cluster more than once.

Earlier in this study, five models of learning communities were described. Decisions must be made about which models make sense at a given institution. Will the community be tied to another initiative on the campus, such as retention, diversity, reformed general education requirements, or faculty development? Are there natural groupings of students already that could benefit from this sort of curricular structure? What thematic clusters are likely to intrigue students and faculty? With the information that learning communities take "at least three years to mature" (Gabelnick et al., 1990, p. 50), what sorts of resources, in terms of money, classroom space, or time, is the institution willing to commit to this endeavor? How will the program be evaluated and improved, and how will this information be disseminated? Some types of learning communities are more costly than others. While some ambitious initiatives have been fueled by external grants, many institutions have implemented these curricular structures without outside funding or with minimal seed grants (Gabelnick et al.). Of the 27 community colleges in the state of Washington, for example, all of which employ learning communities in some fashion, only three have received some sort of grant or external funding (MacGregor, 1999).

Mackay et al. (1996), in their discussion of the STAR program at Long Beach City College, share numerous nitty-gritty administrative details about the implementation of a learning community with their population of students in developmental classes. In addition to the selection of a student population, a theme, a model, and the faculty, they describe their thinking about scheduling, registration, and marketing. For example, they scheduled their learning community's classes only between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. to accommodate the numerous

parents of school-age children. They simplified their telephone registration process by listing in their class schedule one section number, which automatically enrolled a student in all five coordinated courses. Their ongoing marketing attempts included presentations on and off campus, posters, buttons, letters, orientation sessions, newspaper articles, and talking with students in registration lines.

Tinto, Russo, and Kadel-Taras (1996) corroborate the experiences of these other authors. Learning communities go against the "traditional" ways of doing things, and because of that, implementation is time-consuming and registration procedures, academic advising, and evaluation practices "probably all need revisions" (p. 140). What, then, should one consider in designing an evaluation of a learning community? What would a successful program look like?

Evaluative Considerations

What all of this implies, of course, is that learning communities are complex entities. We have discussed various models, each of which could include different kinds of courses and different levels of team-teaching and course integration. Different populations of students--underprepared, honors, freshmen, vocational, community college or university--could be studied. Each institution's context--history, geographical locale, administrative structure, funding, local and state politics--differs greatly. Also, we have identified multiple stakeholder groups that are likely to be very interested in the program: students, participating faculty, prospective learning community faculty, administrators, student service personnel, and perhaps even a number of governmental entities concerned about student learning and retention.

Evaluations of learning communities also are complex as a result. A product- or consumer-oriented approach is not likely to yield information considered compelling to those involved in the implementation of these curricular structures. J. MacGregor (personal communication, March 24, 1999) offered this advice: "Instruments are great for quantitative summation, but often the heart of a program emerges in more qualitative data."

While large-scale evaluations of learning communities are scarce, Tinto and his colleagues (1994, 1996) have written more about learning community evaluation than others. They have relied on the merits of qualitative methods, but also have used surveys.

Cronbach (1975) understood long ago the difficulties in evaluating educational programs. The higher order interactions that could explain the outcomes of such a program often are beyond our grasp. The theories and methodologies either do not exist, or are beyond the abilities of most practitioners. Cronbach advises us to pay attention to contextual details that might help explain sources of variance, and to report these in thickly-described interpretations. The complexity of learning community structures suggests that we are going to need to rely, at least to some extent and perhaps to a great extent, on observation and interview techniques in evaluation.

There is a program logic implied in learning communities. Proponents of these structures explicitly or implicitly express the importance of students becoming enlightened citizens able to contribute to a democratic society. In order to contribute to society, students learn to collaborate and contribute to the discourse in their college classroom. To function as a valuable contributor in the classroom, a student must adapt to the social and academic demands of the college environment. This adaptation is facilitated in a supportive, engaging community of learners. Evaluators and stakeholders must determine what can be measured or observed along these stages (or sequence of events).

Kahne (1994) is critical of policy analysts who use criteria of excellence, efficiency, and equity in discussing policies, but omit attention to how well policies further democratic communitarianism, in which individuals are committed to each other and work together on common projects. Considering the extent of collaborative work in learning communities, and the emphasis on finding one's place in an academic and social community, Kahne's work also may be relevant to educational program evaluation.

It is unseemly to offer this sort of rhetoric, in the context of learning communities, without suggesting elements of participatory, democratic approaches in the evaluation of these curricula. As Greene (1994) points out, this does not prescribe particular methods, but necessitates attention to "whose questions are addressed and which values are promoted" (p. 533). The Winter 1998 issue of New Directions for Evaluation is dedicated to discussions about participatory evaluation. Some participatory approaches prioritize stakeholder ownership and use, while others emphasize the democratization of social change. There is some crossover between these two types, of course, and evaluators of learning communities very well could tap into both. Brandon (1998) discusses the improved validity (because of evaluators' better understanding) and use (because of stakeholders' significant and influential involvement) with stakeholder participation. The complexity of the learning community warrants the exploration of these approaches.

Lucas and Mott (1996) in discussing learning community models used at William Rainey Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, identify several problems in evaluating them. Because of the complexity of these structures, it is difficult to identify criteria. Once identified, there are challenges in determining how to measure them; once measured, what is an important magnitude of effect? In their evaluation they found significant positive effects in areas involving group skills, and some evidence of more positive attitudes toward learning.

They reported unclear results related to possible negative effects on traditional learning skills. Lucas and Mott call for evaluations using more measures of critical thinking, problem solving, cost efficiency, and traditional learning.

Mackay et al. (1996) identify four global questions to address in the evaluation process: (a) What influencing factors affect your population? (b) What are the desired program outcomes? (c) What types of assessments (quantitative and qualitative) will measure your program outcome?, and (d) What strategies will you follow as you formulate your action plan? They also offer logical reasons for the dissemination of information about programs to student service workers, to administrators, and at national conferences: to build support, to establish credibility, to coordinate efforts with other support programs, to allow replication, and to help recruit new students.

Gabelnick et al. (1990) report that large-scale evaluation studies on learning communities are rare. Apparently, the resources required to collect and analyze data to measure achievement, retention, and intellectual development have not been allocated regularly. They believe, however, that the evaluation strategy should be a high priority in the planning of a learning community.

MacGregor (1999), the Director of the National Learning Communities Dissemination Project, points out the importance of assessing learning community students' achievement in order to improve practice, prove the efficacy of learning communities, and strengthen theory. If the integrated courses are represented as the intersecting circles of a Venn diagram, the question is: What is happening in the intersection that would not have happened in stand-alone courses? MacGregor strongly values students' written self-evaluations, letters, and other feedback in attempting to answer this question. She encourages implementers to question what they consider compelling evidence for the

following desirable outcomes: student progress to degree; student academic success; student intellectual development; student engagement; increased faculty-staff vitality, sense of community, and repertoires of practice; and strengthened curricula and pedagogy. She further suggests that there are four variables that seem to make a significant difference in the success of a learning community: attention to community building; active and collaborative learning; high academic expectations and frequent feedback; and curricular connections/integration.

During the planning stages, it should become apparent that the learning community designers have certain ends in mind. What do they hope to accomplish by implementing a learning community structure? How do they think that will come about? It seems likely that some planners and/or administrators will be particularly interested in measures of "traditional learning," such as reading and writing abilities, or critical thinking skills. Others may be more curious about various affective measures, such as self-esteem or academic confidence inventories. Still others may wonder about retention, group behavior, or grades. In any event, it is important to use the key stakeholders, relevant learning community literature, and the experiences of practitioners and other individuals such as MacGregor (1999) to guide the development of research questions. Once the highest priority questions are identified, evaluation methods can be developed.

The benefits of both quantitative and qualitative measures should be considered. Many of the studies discussed in this research used quantitative measures, but omitted a comparison group, either a control group or a matched sample, and the validity of the authors' conclusions is likely to be questioned by some readers. The use of at least some standardized, objective measures, perhaps administered pre and post to learning community students and a similar sample, seems warranted. Survey instruments, perhaps for both

student and faculty participants, could be developed to address particular research questions and individual students' and teachers' experiences. Qualitative methods, including observations and interviews, seem especially valuable in locating unintended effects, and in understanding the hows and whys of student success. These methods, in fact, might be considered crucial steps during the pilot stage, when adjustments to curricular activities are expected.

Finally, one of the chief measures schools use, to determine the meaningfulness of a given student's education, is to follow whether or not that student stayed in school and persisted to graduation or through attainment of employment goals. A longitudinal study, similar to that conducted by Daytona Beach Community College's QUANTA program, seems in order for learning community programs; again, however, results should be compared with a similar group of students in a traditional curriculum. Indeed, these are some of the very recommendations made by Schaad (1997) after completing a case study of a freshman learning community at Black Hawk College, another Illinois community college: (a) pursue a longitudinal study to monitor persistence and academic achievement, (b) use both quantitative and qualitative research methods, (c) replicate the study with a similar group of students and, (d) replicate the study with the same and different faculty teams.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of Evaluation

The primary purpose of this evaluation was to compare the students in the Integrated Studies Communities, a coordinated studies learning community model, with similar underprepared students in the regular curriculum. Interested parties wondered if the learning community structure could enhance persistence and academic and social adjustment of students considered to be academically at-risk. A combination of standardized measures, observations, surveys, interviews, and existing data sources were used to look at academic performance, personal adjustment, and persistence/retention of the students. A secondary focus was the exploration of the experiences of the participating faculty. As the Spring 1998 pilot project was the first implementation of this model at Parkland College, no previous evaluations of this program had been planned or conducted. This evaluation was to assist in fine-tuning the model during the pilot stage, but the design also was to be used on a more longitudinal basis to assist in determining the value of this program. The following research questions were given priority.

Research Questions

1. How does the persistence/retention rate of Integrated Studies Community (ISC) students compare with similar students in the regular curricular structure?

2. What changes are seen in ISC students' adaptation/adjustment to the college environment during the semester? How do they compare with a similar group of students in the regular curriculum?

3. What changes are seen in ISC students' self-esteem/self-confidence during the semester? How do they compare with a similar group of students in the regular curriculum?

4. How does the achievement of the ISC students in LIT 120 compare with the achievement of students in a regular LIT 120 class?

5. What are the participating students' perceptions of the advantages/ disadvantages of the learning community structure?

6. What are the perceptions of the participating faculty of the advantages/ disadvantages of the learning community structure?

7. What changes are seen in ISC students' reading and writing levels during the semester? How do these compare with similar students in the regular curriculum?

Stakeholders

Key stakeholders included the President of Parkland College, the Vice-President for Academic and Student Services, the Board of Trustees, the Integrated Studies Community Task Force, the participating instructors, the Chairs of the academic departments, and the participating students. While these are the individuals having decision-making responsibilities related to the model, a number of other important audiences should be noted: the rest of the faculty at Parkland College; the various branches of Student Services; the student body; and others concerned about issues related to post-secondary developmental education, including a number of other community colleges and baccalaureate-granting institutions, the Illinois Community College Board, and the State of Illinois Board of Higher Education.

The nine students in Schaad's (1997) study all were enrolled in the same classes, but they were not a self-contained group. There were other students in those classes also, who were not studied and who did not take part in the weekly discussion groups organized to build a community. Teachers were not able to integrate course work to any great extent within this structure. The task force at Parkland College proposed, and received administrative support for, a Coordinated Studies model, fully integrating four three-credit-hour classes, Critical Comprehension Skills 098 (a reading and study skills class for students whose reading level is between grade 7 and 9), English 098 or 099 (a developmental writing class), Literature 120 (Introduction to Literature), and Orientation 101 (Strategies for Success in College and Life). Twenty-one students, whose assessment scores were in line with this basic skills curriculum, were to be enrolled during the spring of 1998. Three faculty members were to team-teach the four integrated classes, and to serve in a mentoring capacity to these students. The learning community was scheduled to meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

The model described above is considered Phase 2 of a three-phase program. The Adult Basic Education Transition Class, which existed prior to the Integrated Studies Communities, is considered Phase 1. A third phase was planned for Fall 1998; that phase would include an integration of ENG 099, MAT 094 (Pre-algebra), PSY 101 (Introduction to Psychology), and CCS 099 (a reading and study skills class for students with reading levels at the 10th-to-12th grade level). Not only does the three-phase program offer multiple points-of-entry for students in developmental courses, but it also allows many students to be part of a learning community structure for more than one semester.

Pilot Participants

Student participants included all students enrolled in the Spring 1998 Integrated Studies Community, as well as a matched sample. Also, a sample of students enrolled in LIT 120, but not a part of the learning community, participated during one post measure, designed to give a common exit experience to both groups of students. Because LIT 120 is not available generally to students in developmental reading and writing classes, there was no attempt to match this sample.

At one point early in the spring semester, 12 students were enrolled in the Integrated Studies Community. Only 11 of these students attended with any regularity during the first two weeks of class. One of these 11 students withdrew before the pretests could be completed, so those types of data were collected for 10 students. At midterm there were eight students still enrolled. Students were offered the opportunity to enroll in the ISC based upon their assessment scores in reading and writing (CCS 098 and ENG 098/099). A couple of the students "technically" had passed the CCS 098 requirement previously (by having earned credit in a CCS 098 class), but for a variety of reasons related to prior academic difficulties, elected to re-take this class in the ISC structure. Most of the students had part-time jobs off-campus. Four of the 10 students were parents of young children.

Locating a matched sample for these students proved to be challenging. An attempt was made to locate students enrolled in ORN 101, CCS 098, and ENG 098 or 099 in the regular curriculum. In addition, students were sought who matched the ISC students on the following dimensions: age, sex, and race. Two or three potential matches were identified for each ISC student. The challenge arose in actually finding these students. Of the first 24 students identified, only nine had appeared in their ORN 101 classes by the second week of

class, and many of those were not in regular attendance. A later-start ORN 101 class yielded a few more students. The search for the matched sample is an excellent illustration of our concerns about this population of students: those who assess at this level often are gone before we ever truly get them in the door.

The pilot study's faculty participants included the following individuals: a member of the English faculty (male) who has taught at Parkland since the fall of 1994, and who has served as the coordinator of the developmental writing program; a part-time reading instructor (female) who had taught at Parkland over the last five years, but was to begin a full-time appointment at the college in the fall of 1998; a full-time faculty member teaching sociology and ORN 101, who was the developer of the ORN 101 class, and has worked at the college in various capacities over the past 10 years. Although not participants in the ISC pilot project, other instructors were very helpful and accommodating in allowing access to their ORN 101 classes during the search for the matched sample students. Similarly, one instructor's LIT 120 students wrote the essays for comparison with the ISC students.

Surveyed faculty included the three teamed teachers and those teaching the same courses in the regular curriculum. All students and faculty were advised that their participation was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous, in accordance with Human Subjects Review requirements at the University of Illinois, and with the Policy and Procedure Manual of Parkland College (see Appendix A).

Pilot Instrumentation

The evaluation was designed, in part, to respond to criticisms in the literature that learning communities are not being evaluated using standardized measures. Some evaluators consider this important as a way of attempting to control for the bias of an evaluator who is

internal to the program being evaluated. Thus, the college's usual modes of assessing reading and writing skills were used. Standardized measures of self-esteem and adaptation to college were administered at the beginning and end of the semester. Instruments were chosen based on their history and reliability, reading levels, ease of administration, cost, and appropriateness for this population. Survey instruments were developed to gather student and faculty perceptions about this particular learning community experience, and were administered at the end of the semester. Observations and interviews were included in the design in order to increase the likelihood of recognizing any unintended effects, positive or negative, for either participating students or faculty. Interviews were scheduled at midterm in an effort to identify any needed adjustments in the ISC or evaluation. Figure 1 is a sample management plan describing methods used to address the pilot study's proposed evaluation questions.

Reading levels routinely are assessed at Parkland College through the use of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests (2nd edition, 1978), and this was the instrument used in this study. The Gates-MacGinitie assesses both word knowledge and reading comprehension. Writing competency was measured by the computerized COMPASS test (1997), developed by the American College Testing service. Except for students who demonstrate college-level reading and writing competencies by ACT or SAT scores, or by transferring in successfully completed college-level courses, all entering Parkland students take these assessments.

The Adult Form of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI, 1989) was selected for the pre and post measures of self-esteem. Developed in 1967, the various SEI forms have been used widely and have shown good internal consistency. The Adult Form is a short (25-item), easily-scored instrument. It should be noted that there is no widespread agreement on

EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS	INFORMATION REQUIRED	INFORMATION SOURCE	RESOURCES NEEDED
1. How does the persistence/retention rate of ISC students compare with a matched sample in the regular curricular structure?	Fall, 1998 enrollment records of students enrolled in learning community Spring, 1998, and those of a matched sample	Student Information System	Staff time. Assistance with tracking through Office of Institutional Research?
2. What changes are seen in ISC students' adaptation/adjustment to the college environment during the semester? How do they compare with a matched sample?	Pre and post data on a measure of adaptation	Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (Baker & Siryk, 1989) administered to ISC and matched sample students	Staff time for administration and scoring. Approx. $179.50 for manual and 100 hand-scorable questionnaires.
3. What changes are seen in ISC students' self-esteem/self-confidence during the semester? How do they compare with a matched sample?	Pre and post data on a measure of self-esteem	Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventories (Coopersmith, 1981) administered to ISC and matched sample students	Staff time for administration and scoring. Approx. $19.75 for manual, scoring key, and 100 adult form tests.
4. How does the achievement of the ISC students in LIT 120 compare with the achievement of students in a regular LIT 120 class?	Data from a common exit experience	Literary analyses written by ISC and "regular" LIT 120 students, rated by English faculty raters	Staff time for development of instrument, administration and grading.
5. What are the participating students' perceptions of the advantages/disadvantages of the learning community structure?	Responses from participating students	Survey Interviews Possible focus group?	Staff time to develop survey questionnaire, administer, and score. Staff time to conduct interviews and analyze qualitative data.
6. What are the perceptions of the participating faculty of the advantages/disadvantages of the learning community structure?	Responses from 3 instructors teaming during the Spring, 1998 pilot	Survey Interviews	Staff time to develop survey questionnaire, administer, and score. Staff time to conduct interviews and analyze qualitative data.
7. What changes are seen in ISC students' reading and writing levels during the semester? How do these compare with a matched sample?	Data from pre and post RDG and ENG assessments	Gates-McGinitie and COMPASS assessment scores for ISC and matched sample students	Staff time to administer and score assessment tests.
8. What changes are seen in ISC students' critical thinking skills during the semester? How do they compare with a matched sample?	Pre and post data on a measure of critical thinking	Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (Watson & Glaser, 1942-80) administered to ISC and matched sample students	Staff time for administration and scoring. Approx. $76.00 for manual, 35 test booklets, 105 OpScan answer sheets, hand-scoring stencil.

Figure 1. Sample management plan.

the definition of the concept of self-esteem. While the public frequently assumes that high self-esteem leads to pro-social behaviors, researchers have not been able to offer consistent support for this theory. It is possible that many measures of self-esteem are affected by respondents' tendencies to respond in socially desirable ways. While Coopersmith considers self-esteem integral to school performance, he acknowledges that not all individuals with high self-esteem are well-adjusted in school, and expresses the importance of using supplemental measures and observations. Coopersmith offers no exact criteria for high, medium, or low levels of self-esteem, instead preferring that test users take note of local norms, characteristics, and distributions. In reviewing normative information in the manual, however, it appears that "average" scores tend to include raw scores in the 60s and 70s.

Although more cumbersome to administer and score, the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ, Baker & Siryk, 1989) was used as the pre and post measure of students' adjustment to the college environment. This instrument is a 67-item, self-report measure to be used with college students, originally intended for college freshmen. It yields a Total Score, but this is not considered as meaningful as the four subscales: Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Personal-Emotional Adjustment, and Goal Commitment/Institutional Attachment. The Academic Adjustment subscale includes items related to motivation, how well that motivation is applied, actual academic performance, and satisfaction with the academic environment. The Social Adjustment subscale includes clusters of items addressing social functioning in general, relationships with people on campus, dealing with being away from home and people there, and satisfaction with social aspects of the college environment. Two clusters comprise the Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscale: a sense of psychological and physical well-being. The Attachment subscale includes items addressing the students' satisfaction with being in college in general,

and also their satisfaction with the particular institution in which they are enrolled. It should be noted that the instrument does not evaluate the quality of a student's environment, but focuses instead on the student's adjustment to that environment.

Students in the ISC pilot project completed the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire pre-tests in January of 1998, and the post-tests for both instruments in May of 1998. The matched sample students came from three different ORN 101 classes, not all of which had the same start and end dates. They completed the SEI and SACQ pre-tests in February of 1998, and the post-tests in April, 1998. Students received no compensation other than selecting highlighters, post-it notes, or candy bars from a "goodie bag." Also, they were invited to meet individually with the evaluator if they were interested in their individual test results. All students took advantage of the goodie bag, but none expressed an interest in their results.

Five observations of the ISC classroom took place in January, March, April, and May, 1998. Four ISC students were interviewed (in pairs, at their request) around midterm (March 11, 1998), and the three ISC instructors were interviewed individually the following week on March 18, 1998. Meetings of the instructors and other ISC task force members took place on January 30, May 1, and May 19, 1998. All observations and interviews were completed by the author of this report. Data collected during these activities were analyzed for information addressing the evaluation questions, for recurring themes, and for evidence of extreme or unintended effects. A midterm report summarizing pre-test comparisons, and the earlier observations and interview data, was distributed on April 8, 1998, to the ISC task force, the College President, and the Vice-President for Academic and Student Services. Anonymous survey questionnaires were given to the ISC and matched sample students at the end of the semester. Students were asked in various ways to compare their Spring 1998

academic experience with earlier school experiences. ISC students were asked a few specific open-ended questions about the ISC. Faculty members were surveyed with a different questionnaire, designed to compare Spring 1998 teaching experiences with earlier teaching experiences. The ISC instructors were surveyed, and were asked additional specific open-ended questions about the ISC. The survey also was sent to instructors of ORN 101, ENG 098, ENG 099, CCS 098, and LIT 120 in the regular curriculum. E-mail reminders were sent to this faculty group in an attempt to increase response rate (see Appendices B and C).

The ISC instructor of literature and English composition designed and carried out the writing comparisons between the ISC students and students enrolled in a regular LIT 120 class. Right before midterm, he had the two groups of students read the same short story in class and write an essay analyzing significant aspects of the story (e.g., tone, characters, theme). He repeated this exercise, with a different short story, at the end of the semester. (See Appendix D.) Three English composition instructors, who were blind to the students' treatment conditions or identity, read each essay and assigned scores between 1 and 10. ISC faculty members provided attendance reports and other samples of students' written work. Data on grades and credit hours earned were collected from the Student Information System.

Letters and phone calls were used throughout April and May in an attempt to reach students who had dropped, withdrawn, or ceased attending. It was hoped that some might return to complete post measures, or would be willing to share information explaining their departure from college.

Pilot Data Analyses

It was expected that t-tests for paired samples might be used to explore any mean differences between the self-esteem and adaptation measures for the two groups, the ISC students and the matched sample. At the end of the semester, however, the amount of missing data, resulting from students' withdrawals and erratic attendance patterns, precluded this type of statistical comparison. Missing data also presented problems in comparing end-of-the-semester reading levels for the two groups of the pilot study.

The following analyses, which are not dependent on matching, were conducted to help shed light on the group differences. In order to compare mean differences in grade point averages for the two groups, for matched pairs that actually completed the semester, an effect size was computed. The effect size takes into account the variability within groups, and explains the mean difference in terms of standard deviation units. An effect size also was computed to compare differences in credit hours earned.

Fortunately, the faculty kept good attendance records. The correlation between days attended and credit hours earned was computed.

It seems useful to look at the percentage of students completing CCS 098, ORN 101 and LIT 120 in the ISC, and compare those proportions with those of students in the regular curriculum CCS 098, ORN 101 and LIT 120 classes. Chi-square tests of association were computed to address these questions.

Metaevaluation expertise was provided by Drs. Lizanne DeStefano, Jane Loeb, and Debra Bragg from the University of Illinois College of Education. A draft of the pilot study report was submitted to ISC task force members for review before final dissemination.

Pilot Timeline

Figure 2 is a Gantt chart displaying the evaluation tasks proposed to be completed between October 1997 and September 1998, the specifics of the timeline, and the seven anticipated deliverable products from the pilot evaluation: the proposed evaluation questions, survey questionnaires, pretest results, midterm interview data, posttest results, draft report, and final report. The midterm interview data expanded to a midterm report, delivered on April 8, 1998 and used for formative purposes.

Other Pilot Agreements

Parkland College provided photocopying equipment and supplies, and computer lab access for statistical computations. In addition, Parkland granted the evaluator sufficient release time from usual job duties to conduct the interviews and observations that were a part of the evaluation, to attend relevant meetings, and to complete a portion of the final report. Most instrument development, scoring, data analysis, other evaluation planning, consultation with metaevaluators, and report writing occurred during the evaluator's own time. Data collected during this evaluation remained the property of Parkland College. The evaluator retained rights to use these data, however, in future publications.

The evaluator made reasonable attempts to accommodate changes in the evaluation questions or methods requested during the conduct of this evaluation. Clients were informed by the evaluator how these changes could compromise the utility, feasibility, propriety, or accuracy of the findings. The only significant change from the original design was the deletion of an evaluation question addressing pre and post measures of critical thinking; this had involved a time-consuming and relatively costly standardized measure.

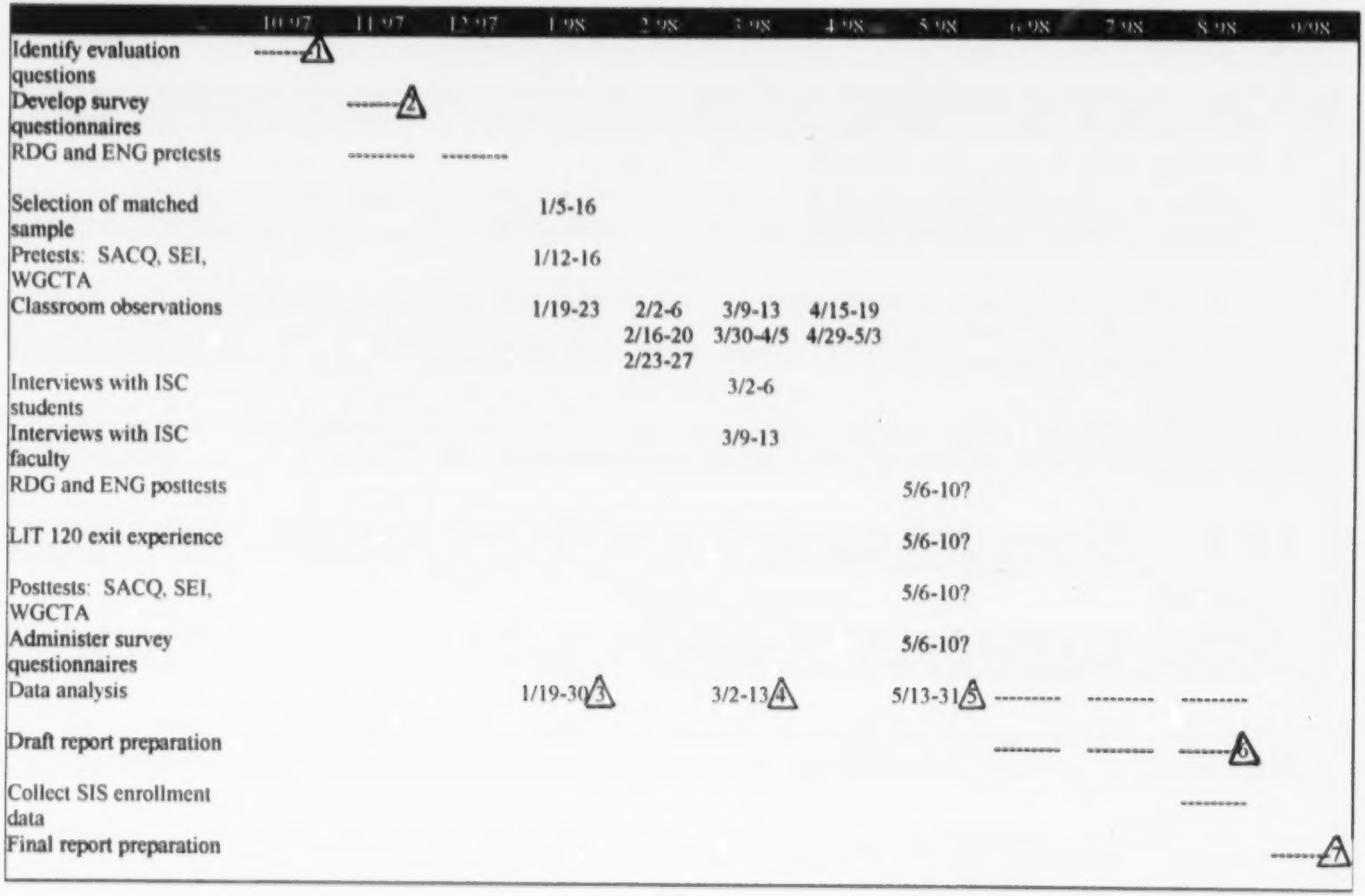

Figure 2. Gantt chart of evaluation tasks and timeline (Δ = deliverable product, 1 = preliminary evaluation questions, 2 = survey questionnaires, 3 = pretest data, 4 = midterm interview data, 5 = posttest data, 6 = draft report, 7 = final report).

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Dissemination

The final report was disseminated to faculty and administrative key stakeholders and to Parkland College's Office of Institutional Research. Interested students and other faculty members were offered information about the results of the evaluation. Because the evaluator is internal to the institution, and a member of the task force, frequent informal communication related to the evaluation took place in meetings, during observations and interviews, and via e-mail. Another deliverable product prior to the final report included a midterm report.

Pilot Limitations

The Spring 1998 implementation of the Integrated Studies Community at Parkland College was a pilot project involving a small number of students statistically at risk academically. Any study designed to yield deep understandings of a few particular individuals in a particular situation is subject to criticism for its lack of generalizability. The expressed intent of the pilot study was to focus on what changes could be effected in a small group of students given a different sort of curriculum. It seemed likely, however, that the student participants would be similar to other Parkland students in developmental courses and also, perhaps, to students at many other community colleges.

It was known that random assignment to treatment groups was impossible, so a matched sample design was developed. Potential matched sample candidates, students in the same developmental courses as the ISC but in the regular curriculum, were difficult to locate, not because they were not on rosters, but because they were not in class. Eventually, a matched sample was located, and pre-tests were collected. Over the course of the semester,

however, many of these students disappeared. Some attended off and on, and some were not seen again after they left. At the end of the semester, there were very few pairs of students with posttests to compare. This greatly limited the likelihood of finding any statistical significance in the results of the standardized measures used.

The evaluator is internal to the organization, and concerns about bias in the report might well be justified. It would be difficult to be both an ethical community college counselor and ambivalent about programs that might help students. It is hoped that the multiple methods and sources of data used in this evaluation might allay some concerns.

During the Spring 1998 pilot project, only three instructors participated. It certainly cannot be assumed that the experiences of three talented, energetic, and enthusiastic faculty members will generalize to all other instructors. At the end of the semester, 17 teachers were surveyed outside of the ISC faculty. Eight (47%) returned the questionnaire. Again, any conclusions were somewhat tentative because of the small numbers.

Full Implementation, Fall 1998 and Spring 1999

The grouping of four courses piloted during the spring of 1998 (ISC II) was repeated during the fall of 1998. While one instructor had assumed responsibility for both the literature and writing components during the pilot, these duties were divided in the fall, with the addition of a fourth instructor. ISC II continued to meet from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Another community, ISC III, was piloted during the fall. Four instructors integrated CCS 099 (a reading and study skills course), ENG 099 (an English composition class), PSY 101 (Introduction to Psychology), and MAT 094 (Pre-algebra). ISC III was scheduled, primarily because of classroom availability, to meet Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

During the spring of 1999, the same constellation of ISC II classes was offered, although there were some staffing changes. Two full-time faculty members (reading and literature) rotated out, and two part-time faculty members rotated in. The four ISC III instructors, two full-time and two part-time, remained constant in the spring. At the request of the mathematics department chair, however, a Beginning Algebra (MAT 095) class was offered rather than Pre-algebra. Some of the fall ISC III students, who had completed MAT 094 successfully, joined the spring ISC III group for the MAT 095 class. ISC III met on a Monday, Wednesday, and Friday schedule during the spring. On Wednesdays the group met until 3:00 p.m. in order to have an hour in a computer lab each week.

Participants

Twenty of the 24 students enrolled in the fall ISC II completed pretest measures; these data also were collected from 17 students in the fall ISC III. Enrollment in the spring was somewhat lower. Fourteen ISC II enrollees participated in the study, as did 10 of the ISC III students.

The pilot study demonstrated the serious limitations of using a matched sample design with this population of students. During the full implementation of the 98-99 academic year, student-participants for a comparison group were solicited from the daytime developmental reading classes in the regular curriculum. Evening students were not included, as that population of students tends to be older, on average, than students enrolled in the ISCs. In the fall 83 students enrolled in CCS 098 completed the pretests; 66 students from CCS 099 classes participated. Enrollment in developmental reading classes is considerably lower during the spring semester. Still, an additional 25 CCS 098 students and 31 CCS 099 students completed the pretest measures in the spring of 1999.

ISC II faculty participants were the same as in the Spring 1998 pilot except for the addition of a fourth instructor, a full-time (female) teacher of literature and composition. The ISC III faculty participants included the following individuals: a part-time (female) reading instructor; a part-time (male) English composition instructor; a full-time (female) mathematics instructor of long tenure; and an instructor of psychology (female) who joined the full-time ranks during the 98-99 academic year, after many years as a part-time faculty member.

Despite task force and administrative interest in recruiting a diverse faculty, all ISC instructors during the 98-99 implementation were white. Of the student-participants, however, 65% of ISC II enrollees and 56% of those from ISC III were African-American. Additional demographic information about the student-participants is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Student-Participants' Demographics

Category	ISC II			ISC III	
Mean age	19.32			19.04	
Reading pretest					
Mean grade-level score	7.75			10.11	
Ethnicity	Afr-Am	White	As/Pac Isl	Afr-Am	White
Percentage	64.7	32.4	2.9	55.6	44.4
Sex	Male	Female		Male	Female
Percentage	44.1	55.9		37	63
Number	15	19		10	17

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Category	CCS 098 comparison group				CSS 099 comparison group		
Mean age	20.14				19.8		
Reading pretest							
Mean grade-level score	8.16				10.17		
Ethnicity	Afr-Am	White	Hispanic	As/Pac Isl	Afr-Am	White	As/Pac Isl
Percentage	49.9	48	5.1	1	22.7	71.1	5.2
Sex	Male	Female			Male	Female	Not reported
Percentage	54.1	45.9			39.2	59.8	1
Number	53	45			38	58	1
	TOTAL						
Mean age	19.79						
Mean grade-level reading	9.06						

Instrumentation

Most of the methods and instruments used in the original pilot study continued to be used throughout this research project. A sample timeline is given in Appendix E. The standardized assessments of reading and writing skills were serviceable, as were the comparisons of literary analyses, faculty and student surveys, observations, and interviews. Different short story prompts were chosen, however, for the literary analyses during the Spring 1999 semester ("Prue" by Alice Munro and "The Hand" by Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette). Also, due to the difficulty of scheduling individual student interviews, ISC faculty allowed the evaluator classroom time to gain additional student feedback in more of a focus group setting. The following changes from the pilot also were made.

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory did not, upon further consideration, seem likely to measure student change over the course of one semester. It was not included in the evaluation design after the pilot, despite its face appeal.

The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire seemed more promising, but the students participating in this study, particularly those in ISC II and the CCS 098 classes, appeared to struggle with the wording and reading level of many of the items. Because of this, the evaluator shortened the instrument somewhat, from 67 to 56 items, and reworded many of the items (e.g., "Lonesomeness for home is a source of difficulty for me at this time" was changed to "I've been feeling homesick") (see Appendix F).

Data Analyses

Statistical analyses and analyses of qualitative data are similar to those described in the pilot implementation. The larger numbers of participants, however, allowed certain statistical comparisons that were not possible during the pilot project.

The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire was altered considerably from the original, and it was expected that data from the revision would be factor analyzed according to procedures used by the original questionnaire's authors. A review of the SACQ manual, the literature (Baker & Siryk, 1984, 1986) and personal communication (R. W. Baker, January 26 and 28, 1999) confirmed that the original items were assigned to the various factors by "logical analysis" of the first author. An exploratory analysis of the principal components was conducted on the revised instrument.

During the spring of 1999, the primary clients (the administration at Parkland College) requested additional information addressing the "institutional impact" of the learning community implementation. In particular, an analysis of the financial costs and benefits was

requested. As this became an important emergent evaluation question, these cost-benefit projections were compiled through Parkland's Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation, but are not included as part of this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

It is snowing and blowing outside, blizzard conditions almost, the morning of March 9. Although I am familiar with the Parkland College campus, it is difficult to navigate the perimeter road and parking areas in these extreme conditions. I pull my car into what I think might be a parking place near the E Building, which houses the Integrated Studies Community that I have come to observe.

The Integrated Studies Community (ISC) is a project on this campus designed to offer a different sort of curriculum for underprepared college students. In this curricular structure, four courses are linked, and the participating students, all of whom have been assessed as having a reading level in the 7th-to-9th-grade range, take the classes together as a group. The two developmental courses in the cluster are for building reading and writing skills; the two content-area courses include Orientation to College and Introduction to Literature. Four instructors team-teach from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. three days per week; there are no 50-minute divisions of classes.

Given the inclement weather, it is not particularly surprising to see that only a few students are in attendance this morning. (A few more arrive 30 minutes later.) Ben Goldberg, an instructor of literature and writing, wears jeans and a sweatshirt, and is sitting on top of a table at the front of the room. Jana Sutter, who teaches reading and study skills, is seated at the back of the room, listening as Ben leads a discussion of a poem by Dudley Randall. Ben is using the poem, about the bombing of a church in Birmingham, to illustrate a number of literary devices. He reads the poem aloud, and directs the discussion toward the poet's use of <u>understatement</u> in representing the perspective of a mother in the poem. There

is some discussion of Spike Lee's recent film, "Four Little Girls," related to these same church bombings. Samuel, a black male student in his late teens, describes a woman locking her car doors and averting her eyes while passing him on the street. "I had a backpack. I looked like a student! I was close to a school!" he exclaims. The instructors seem to encourage and reinforce the students' springboarding from the material to their personal experiences, even though the students' observations sometimes seem only marginally related.

Ben reads the poem aloud again. He prompts the students to think about how to interpret Dudley Randall's thoughts. Might Randall be criticizing the mother in the poem? Ben asks about the irony of the mother sending the child to a "safe" church, where the child is killed, rather than allowing the child to participate in the marches in Birmingham. He discusses Randall's role as a "political poet."

I find myself easily drawn into the poem and the discussion. Most of the students present seem to be active and engaged participants, but Kamika's head is down. She responds only if called upon. Ben tells her he will continue to call on her at regular intervals. It all sounds good-natured, but it also is clear that he means it. Kamika says she is tired.

Jana asks the class why they think Randall wrote a particular stanza, the lines describing the mother's careful grooming of her child. Two of the students (the reader might recall that these students are said to read and write at the level of an average junior high student) offer the following: "It represents the total innocence of the child," and "It represents the mother's denial of the outside world." Ben helps the students relate the views of the mother in the Randall poem to views held by various characters in "Raisin in the Sun," which the class read earlier in the semester, but they cannot stick with this topic for long. Samuel begins talking about Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ben tells them they will be reading the letter King wrote from the Birmingham Jail. A student known only as "J" says that he

heard a song called "Birmingham Jail" in a Richard Pryor movie; he sings a bit of it. Kamika reminds everyone that she is tired --"We shouldn't be having school."

Ben reads another poem aloud: "Formula" by Langston Hughes. Ben again works with the students to help them interpret what might be Hughes' actual view compared with what is stated in the poem. Again, he mentions the increase in political poetry during the Harlem Renaissance, but the insight shown by the students just moments ago is not so evident now.

The class is given a quiz. They are asked to read a very short story, "Barbie-Q" by Sandra Cisneros, from their literature book. They are to discuss tone, characters, theme, and any other aspect they consider significant. Ben plainly states, "You're writing an essay. You'll probably write at least two paragraphs." The story, while funny, has issues of race, class, and gender, clearly ongoing themes in this class.

After the quiz the class is reminded of a story they had read previously, "The Lesson," written in 1972. Apparently, the students had some questions about the hair-related references in the story. Jana has brought in a video of the movie, "Hair," and she plays the segment with the title song. The students laugh. J, who is in his early 40s, explains some of the reasons people grew their hair long, and why he still wears his long.

I am struck by how hard these teachers are working, how much material they have to have ready each day to keep these students engaged, yet how flexible and relaxed they seem to be. What is important to these teachers, in this curricular structure, in this school, is keeping these students in school long enough to build skills and feel a part of the world of higher education. It is hoped that a taste of this will create in these students a hunger for more. This classroom was full at the beginning of the semester. Half of those enrolled continue to attend, albeit sporadically. On a snowy, blustery day, even fewer are here. I

imagine the teachers would prefer that more students were here today, but those in attendance still get a full lesson. It is an interesting tightrope these teachers walk. They must present material that is meaningful and engaging to students who have not done well in school previously, but this same material must challenge and encourage these students to push their thinking, reading, and writing skills to a higher level. They must structure a curriculum which is flexible enough to accommodate these students' often-chaotic lives, while moving them toward success in a more structured, formal learning environment. They must function as advocates and mentors of these students while keeping the boundaries of their roles clear.

This particular vignette actually describes a scene from the Spring 1998 pilot implementation of the Integrated Studies Community II. It is included here because it seems to help give meaning to several of the issues to be discussed in this chapter. This evaluation was organized around six research questions. This chapter also will be organized around these questions:

1. How does the persistence/retention rate of Integrated Studies Community (ISC) students compare with similar students in the college's regular curricular structure?

2. What changes are seen in ISC students' adaptation/adjustment to the college environment during the semester? How do they compare with similar students in the regular curriculum?

3. How does the achievement of the ISC students in LIT 120 compare with the achievement of students in a regular LIT 120 class?

4. What are the participating students' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of the learning community structure?

5. What are the perceptions of the participating faculty of the advantages and disadvantages of the learning community structure?

6. What changes are seen in ISC students' reading and writing levels during the semester? How do these compare with similar students in the regular curriculum?

Just as programs seem more complex the more familiar one is with their contexts, so too the questions became more complex than they first appeared. While this evaluation is a look back at the implementation of the program during the 1998-99 academic year, the data were collected during this implementation, and often were used for formative purposes. In general the questions required a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection to respond to the concerns of the clients and primary stakeholders.

Persistence and Retention

Evidence of student retention and persistence was collected from a number of sources. These included: number of credit hours earned; grade point averages; individual course completion rates; enrollment patterns; and attendance rates.

Credit Hours Earned

Program people felt encouraged after the Fall 1998 semester when it was learned that students completing ISC II earned an average 11.05 credit hours compared with the 9.81 credit hours earned by the CCS 098 comparison group. In addition, the ISC III completers earned 12.77 credit hours, on average, compared with their CCS 099 comparison group's 8.9 credit hours. In the spring, however, there was a low rate of completion for ISC II students. Although the spring ISC II completers earned an average of 11.6 credit hours, only 50% of the spring ISC II participants earned any credit hours at all. Over the course of the year, independent t-tests indicated no significant difference in the number of credit hours earned by the ISC II students and their comparison group. The difference between the number of credit

hours earned by the ISC III students and their comparison group, however, was found to be significant ($p = .001$). When the data for the two ISCs are aggregated and compared with data aggregated from the CCS 098 and 099 comparison groups, the ISC students were found to have completed significantly more credit hours ($p = .039$) (see Table 3).

Table 3

T-tests for Credit Hours Earned

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
ISC II	33	8.79	5.22			
				-0.04	112	0.97
CCS 098	81	8.83	4.45			
ISC III	24	12.13	3.58			
				3.51	103	0.001
CCS 099	81	8.65	4.43			
ISCs	57	10.19	4.86			
				-2.08	217	0.039
CCS	162	8.74	4.43			

The dependent variable, earned credit hours, is a useful measure of student retention. The evaluation question addressing retention asks about the effects of learning community participation. It seemed important, however, to explore additional student variables, other than belonging to a learning community or not, that might have predictive value for credit hours earned, and thus a confounding effect. A stepwise regression equation was used to explore the effects of age, race (black or white), reading pretest scores, sex, and group (ISC or not) on earned credit hours. The two variables found to be significant were race ($p = .002$)

and group (p = .009), with white students predicted to earn more credit hours than black students, and ISC students to earn more credit hours (+1.89) than students not in an ISC. For all student participants, African-American students (n = 90) earned 8.11 credit hours on average (SD = 5.08), compared with 9.78 (SD = 4.06) for white students (n = 120). There were very few students in the cells for Hispanic/Latino (n = 3) and Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 5) students, so those participants were not included in the regression equation. The Latino students, however, earned an average of 11.33 credit hours (SD = .58), and the Asian/Pacific Islanders earned an average of 9.0 (SD = 5.34).

When the same independent variables were entered in a multiple regression equation, but not stepwise, the same two variables emerged as statistically significant: race (p = .009) and group (p = .011). One final multiple regression equation was used to explore a possible interaction between race and group. In other words, the question of interest was whether the effects of being in an ISC or not were different for white and black students. No significant interaction was found. When all effects of age, reading scores, sex, and ISC membership were accounted for, white students still tended to earn more credit hours than black students. It is also true, however, that when all effects of age, reading scores, sex, and race were accounted for, ISC students tended to earn more credit hours than students not in ISCs (see Tables 4, 5, and 6). It should be noted that these regression equations did not contain predictors for socioeconomic status. The significance of race as a predictor might have been different had socioeconomic status been included in the equations.

Grade Point Averages

Independent t-tests revealed no statistically significant differences when comparing grade point averages of the ISC students with their comparison groups for either the fall or

spring semesters alone, nor when the data were aggregated over the academic year. While grades are fickle benchmarks, the trend was toward the ISC students earning comparable or lower GPAs in the fall and somewhat higher GPAs in the spring. Over the course of the year, ISC II students earned a mean GPA of 2.45 while the CCS 098 comparison group earned a 2.54 mean GPA. The ISC III students, by comparison, earned an average GPA of 2.39, while their CCS 099 comparison group earned a 2.36 average (see Table 7).

Table 4

Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Credit Hours Earned

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Step 1			
Blkwht	1.65	0.64	.18*
Step 2			
Blkwht	2.03	0.64	.22*
ISC	189	0.72	.18*

Note. N = 209; R^2 = .03 for Step 1, .06 for Step 2. Excluded variables: Age (p = .08 Step 1, .13 Step 2); Readpre (p = .21 Step 1, .15 Step 1; Sex (p = .37 Step 1, .41 Step 2).

*$p \leq .01$.

Table 5

Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Credit Hours Earned

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Age	-0.13	0.08	-0.1
Blkwht	1.74	0.66	.19*
Readpre	0.34	0.23	0.1
Sex	0.42	0.63	0.05
ISC	1.85	0.72	.18*

Note. N = 209. R^2 = .086.

*$p \leq .01$.

Table 6

Simultaneous Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Credit Hours Earned, Including Interaction Between ISC and Race

Variable	B	SE B	Beta
Model 1			
Age	-0.13	0.08	-0.1
Blkwht	1.74	0.66	.19*
Readpre	0.34	0.23	0.1
Sex	0.42	0.63	0.05
ISC	1.85	0.72	.18*
Model 2			
Age	-0.13	0.08	-0.1
Blkwht	1.121	0.77	0.12
Readpre	0.36	0.23	0.11
Sex	0.40	0.63	0.04
ISC	-1.38	2.2	-0.13
OSCBW	2.21	1.43	0.32

Note. $N = 209$. $R^2 = .096$ for Model 1 and .097 for Model 2.

*$p \leq .01$.

Perhaps it also should be noted that the ISC II students earned their comparable GPA while enrolled in a rigorous, college-level course (LIT 120). None of the ISC II students, for example, earned a grade of A in the LIT 120 course. Similarly, the ISC III students earned their GPA while enrolled in PSY 101, a course not usually available to students at their writing level, and while earning significantly more credit hours than their comparison group.

Table 7

T-tests for Grade Point Averages Earned

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
ISC II	26	2.45	0.91			
				-0.41	97	0.68
CCS 098	73	2.54	0.9			
ISC III	24	2.39	0.86			
				0.16	96	0.875
CCS 099	74	2.36	0.91			
Fall 98 ISCs	33	2.31	0.96			
				1.11	138	0.271
Fall 98 CCS	107	2.5	0.85			
Spring 99 ISCs	17	2.64	0.67			
				-1.26	55	0.214
Spring 99 CCS	40	2.3	1.04			

Course Completion Rates

It became difficult to compare ISC course completion rates with those in the regular curriculum due to the widely varying rates across sections of the same course in the regular curriculum. With the exception of the college-level LIT 120 and PSY 101 courses, however, ISC students tended to complete courses at rates similar to, or better than, students in sections with the highest completion rates (see Table 8).

Table 8

Course Completion Rates (Percentage of Enrollees Earning Credit)

Group	CSS 098	CCS 099	ENG 098	ENG 099	ORN 101	MAT 094	MAT 095	PSY 101	LIT 120
Fall 1998									
ISC II	79	NA	83	90	83	NA	NA	NA	63
ISC III	NA	78	NA	71	NA	67	NA	61	NA
Regular curriculum	77	72	68	72	68	67	NA	74	82
Spring 1999									
ISC II	47	NA	38	100	47	NA	NA	NA	40
ISC III	NA	93	NA	93	NA	NA	64	73	NA
Regular curriculum	60	67	25-75	27-78	26-75	NA	23-65	83	90

CCS. The data become a bit more meaningful, perhaps, when viewed by individual semesters. In the fall, for example, ISC students completed their reading (CCS) courses at slightly higher rates than the students in the comparison groups. Seventy-nine percent of the students that enrolled in the fall ISC II completed CCS 098, while 77% of those in the regular curriculum did. Seventy-eight percent of the fall ISC III enrollees completed CCS 099, while 72% of their comparison group did. As mentioned earlier, the spring ISC II group had a high drop-out rate. Only 47% of the students that enrolled in that group completed CCS 098, while 60% of their comparison group did. The spring ISC III group, however, had a very high completion rate for CCS 099 (93%); only 67% of their comparison group earned credit for this course.

English composition. English composition course completion rates followed similar patterns. ISC II students were enrolled in either ENG 098 or ENG 099. In the fall, 83% of the ISC II ENG 098 enrollees completed the course while 68% of ENG 098 students in the regular curriculum did. Of the ISC II students enrolled in ENG 099, 90% earned credit for the course, with 60% of them earning the grade of A or B necessary to advance to ENG 101. Of the ENG 099 enrollees in the fall ISC III, 71% earned credit, and 53% earned a grade of A or B. In the regular curriculum ENG 099 classes, 72% earned credit, and 52% earned a grade of A or B. While 100% of the spring ISC II students who placed into ENG 099 completed that course, only 38% of the ENG 098 enrollees completed their spring English course (a rate better than some sections of ENG 098 in the regular curriculum, but poorer than others). Fifty-two percent of the spring CCS 098 comparison group earned credit for either ENG 098 or 099. Ninety-three percent of the spring ISC III students earned credit for ENG 099, with 66% of the students earning the A or B required for advancement. "A or B" completion rates for spring ENG 099 sections in the regular curriculum varied from 18 to 66%, placing the ISC III students in a position comparable to the best of these sections. Only 53% of the students in the spring CCS 099 comparison group earned credit for some English composition course.

ORN 101. The fall ISC II students completed the ORN 101 course at a much higher rate than students taking that course in the regular curriculum (83% versus 68%). The spring group's high drop-out rate resulted in a completion rate of only 47% for ORN 101. Completion rates in the regular curriculum ORN 101 spring classes varied from 26 to 75%. ORN 101 classes, it should be noted, enroll students from both college-level and preparatory reading and writing levels, although they typically enroll a higher proportion of preparatory readers than most courses at the college.

Mathematics. The fall ISC III included MAT 094 (Pre-algebra) in its schedule. In both the ISC III and in the regular curriculum MAT 094 classes that semester, 67% of the students enrolled earned credit for the course. Because advancement to the next level of math requires a grade of C or better, it should be noted that 60% of MAT 094 enrollees in the regular curriculum were able to advance, while only 44% of the ISC III enrollees were. Of the ISC III students that persisted to the end of the semester, 61.5% earned a grade of C or better. The fact that some competent ISC III students failed to make the grade in math was a source of some frustration to the instructors. Math class typically met after the students had a brief lunch break; some students frequently failed to return to class after the break. Unfortunately, math was scheduled at the end of a long day for the students during the spring semester as well. This time MAT 095 (Beginning Algebra) was offered in place of Pre-algebra. Instructors expressed disappointment that only 64% of the students earned credit for the course, and only 45% had the grades to advance to the next level (Geometry or Intermediate Algebra). Still, this completion rate was comparable to the best of the classes in the regular curriculum, which had completion rates from 23 to 65%, with only 15 to 58% of the students earning grades of C or better.

LIT 120. The fall ISC II students' completion rate of LIT 120 was compared with that of a LIT 120 class taught during the fall semester by the same instructor. The two groups of students were dissimilar in that the ISC II students had placed into either ENG 098 or ENG 099, while LIT 120 students in the regular curriculum are required to be eligible for ENG 101. The LIT 120 course proved somewhat difficult for the ISC II students in the fall. Of students enrolled in ISC II, 63% earned credit for LIT 120. Of the 21 ISC II persisters, 71% earned credit for the course (with no student earning an "A" in the course, and with five students earning a grade of "D"). In the instructor's LIT 120 course in the regular

curriculum, 82% of those enrolled completed the course. These LIT 120 results are not consistent with data collected during the Spring 1998 pilot. ISC II instructors report that the fall's LIT 120 course was more rigorous than the Spring 1998 course, with more stories being covered, and with more literature containing themes and material difficult for the students to grasp. The fall LIT 120 instructor reported working hard to keep the ISC and regular curriculum LIT 120 courses as similar as possible. The spring completion rate differences were even more dramatic, with only 40% of the ISC II students earning credit for the course, compared with 90% in the regular curriculum. The spring ISC II LIT course was taught by yet again another instructor. The students' struggles with the college-level LIT course led to the substitution of SPE 101 (Introduction to Oral Communication) for the fall of 1999.

PSY 101. The fall ISC III students' PSY 101 completion rate was compared with that of a PSY 101 class taught by the same instructor in the regular curriculum. Again, the two groups of students were dissimilar. The ISC III students had placed into ENG 099, while PSY 101 students in the regular curriculum must be eligible for ENG 101. Sixty-one percent of the students enrolled in ISC III in the fall earned credit for PSY 101. Of the 13 ISC III persisters, however, 85% completed the course (with one student earning an "A" in the course). In the instructor's regular PSY 101 class, 74% of those enrolled completed the course. Spring results also were more encouraging than those for LIT 120. Seventy-three percent of the spring ISC III students completed PSY 101, compared with 83% in the same instructor's regular PSY 101 class.

Attendance

During the evaluation of the Spring 1998 pilot implementation of ISC II, a correlation of .95 between class attendance and number of credit hours earned was found. When Fall

1998 and Spring 1999 data are combined, a less dramatic, but still high and statistically significant correlation (r = .75), is found.

While student attendance caused concern during the pilot implementation, attendance in both Fall 1998 ISCs was quite high. The ISC II persisters had an attendance rate of 86%, with female students attending somewhat more regularly (89%) than males (83%). White females in the ISC II had the highest attendance rate (98%), and black female students had the least regular attendance (83%). ISC III persisters attended at a slightly higher rate overall (90%). In the ISC III, however, male students attended more regularly (94%) than females (88%). Black male students had the highest attendance rate (94%) in the ISC III; black females, while still having a high rate of attendance (87%), attended less regularly than the other students. Attendance rates were of concern in the Spring 1999 ISCs, just as they had been during the Spring 1998 pilot. The patterns reported with jubilation in the fall were nowhere to be seen in the spring. "Our retention of black male students was non-existent," reported a dismayed ISC II instructor, a reference to the fact that none of the seven African-American males enrolled in the spring ISC II earned a single credit-hour. Before withdrawing, their attendance rate was low (61%) compared with their classmates. Black female students in the spring ISC II had a 75% attendance rate, while white males had an 83% rate, and white females, an 87% rate of attendance.

African-American males enrolled in the spring ISC III fared considerably better, with a 79% attendance rate, and two students with perfect or nearly perfect attendance. Of seven black male students in the spring ISC III, five earned a substantial number of credit hours (10-12). The attendance rate for white females in the spring ISC III was 84%, and 86% for African-American females. There were no white male enrollees. Attendance rates of students in the comparison groups from the regular curriculum were not available.

Enrollment

Fall 1998 to Spring 1999 persistence. Students from the fall ISCs were likely to enroll at Parkland the following semester. Eighty-three percent of the students that had enrolled in one of the fall ISCs also enrolled and completed credit hours in the spring of 1999. Eighty-one percent of the ISC II students persisted, compared with 70% of their CCS 098 comparison group; 85% of the ISC III students persisted, compared with 76% of their CCS 099 comparison group. These ISC persistence rates compare favorably with data reported from 1997-98 by Parkland's Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation (OIRE), which indicated first-time full-time students from the fall of 1997 returned in the spring at a rate of 82.7% (85.3% for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students). The OIRE data are not limited to students in developmental courses, but also include students who demonstrated college-level skills in their assessments. Fall ISC students and the students in the fall comparison groups earned an average of 7-8 credit hours during the spring semester (see Figure 3).

Spring 1999 to Fall 1999 persistence. Sixty percent of the Spring 1999 ISC II students were enrolled at Parkland as of the tenth day of the Fall 1999 semester. Recall that this was the group that dropped out in high numbers; more students from this group enrolled for the fall of 1999 than the number that actually earned credits the previous spring. One of the Spring 1999 instructors reported that students would say, "This was great," even as they were withdrawing due to poor academic performance and attendance. Apparently, some of these students decided to try again. While 60% of the ISC II students were back, only 38% of their CCS 098 comparison group re-enrolled for the Fall 1999 semester. Of the Spring 1999 ISC

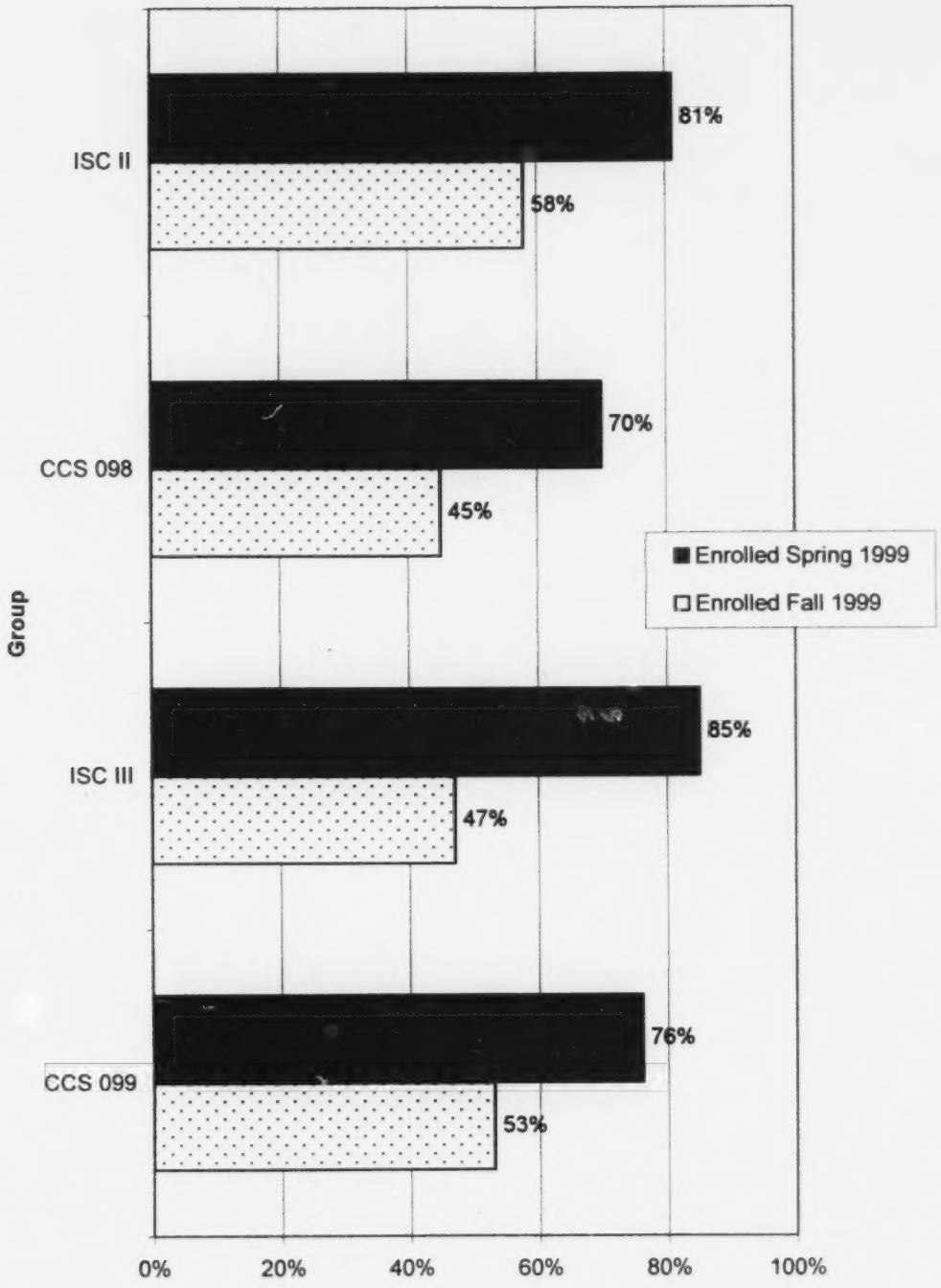

Figure 3. Percentage of Fall 1998 enrollees also enrolled in subsequent (Spring 1999 and Fall 1999) semesters.

III students, 67% re-enrolled Fall 1999, compared with 49% of their CCS 099 comparison group. Again, the ISC persistence rates appear to compare favorably with the OIRE data, which showed that 47.5% of students enrolled for credit in the spring of 1998 enrolled again in the fall of 1998. The OIRE did not break data down into rates for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students.

Former ISC students attempted more credit hours, on average, than their comparison groups. Spring ISC II students enrolled in an average 11.89 credit hours during the fall of 1999, and former spring ISC III students enrolled in an average of 13.1 (12.53 average with the two groups combined). The CCS 098 comparison group enrolled in an average of 9 credit hours; the CCS 099 comparison group attempted 11.97 credit hours on average (see Figure 4).

Fall 1998 to Fall 1999 persistence. Fifty-eight percent of the students that were enrolled in the Fall 1998 ISC II were still enrolled at Parkland as of the tenth day of the Fall 1999 semester, compared with 45% of their CCS 098 comparison group. While 47% of the Fall 1998 ISC III students re-enrolled for the fall of 1999, 53% of their CCS 099 comparison group were enrolled, the only example that has surfaced of a comparison group persisting in higher numbers than an ISC. Again, former ISC students attempted more credit hours than the comparison groups: 13.64 for ISC II persisters; 12.63 for ISC III persisters (13.27 for the two ISC groups combined); 12.23 for the CCS 098 comparison group; and 12.31 for the CCS 099 comparison group.

Adaptation/Adjustment

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

During the evaluation of the Spring 1998 pilot, participating students completed a

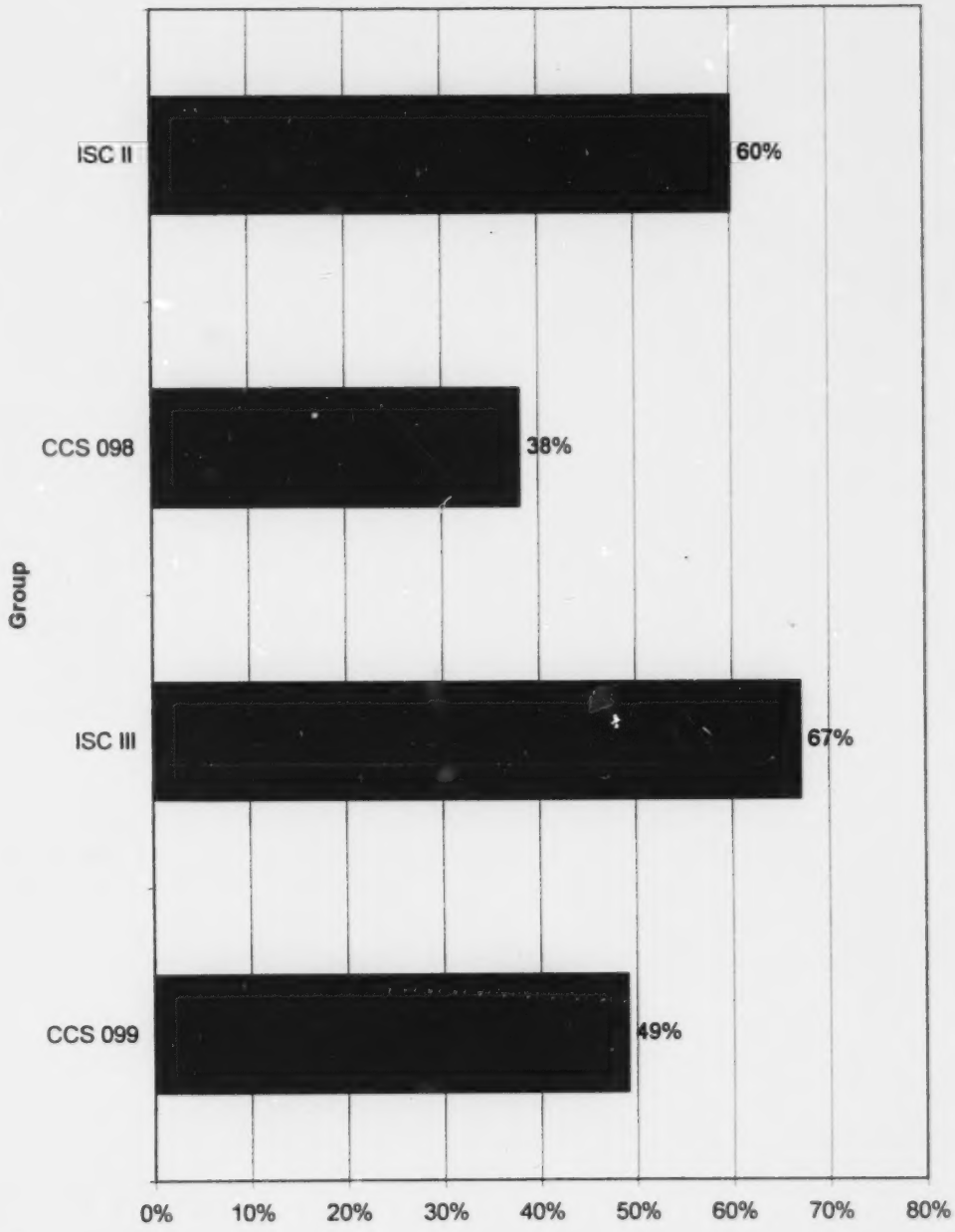

Figure 4. Percentage of Spring 1999 enrollees also enrolled Fall 1999.

standardized measure, the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ, Baker & Siryk, 1989). The SACQ was designed to measure multiple facets of student adjustment: academic, social, personal-emotional, and goal commitment/institutional attachment. The instrument was altered somewhat for the 1998-99 evaluation in an attempt to simplify the language and make the questions more appropriate for a community college student population. Additionally, the instrument was shortened to 56 items from the original 67. Fall and spring ISC students and their comparison groups completed the adaptation of the SACQ at the beginning and end of the semester.

According to Robert Baker, the chief developer of the original SACQ, the various subscales were labeled by "logical analysis," but no statistical factor analysis took place (personal communication, January 26 and 28, 1999). Over the years these logical assignments appear to have been confirmed through research, but the new, altered version has no such history.

An analysis of the principal components was conducted to explore what factors might emerge, from the altered version administered to 256 respondents, to explain the maximum amount of common variance in a correlation matrix of the 56 items. Such a matrix is large and messy; this procedure was selected in an attempt to reduce the data to something that could be interpreted. The assumption, just as with the original instrument, was that there would be underlying constructs, hypothetical though they may be, that might account for a large portion of the variance in the correlations.

The default setting on SPSS for factor analyses retains only those components with eigenvalues (the sum of the squared factor loadings) greater than one (Kaiser, 1960). This setting was used in the initial exploratory analysis, as well as in subsequent explorations of solutions in which the data were forced into four or five factors. Additionally, a scree plot

(Cattell, 1966) was examined to see what could be considered the likely number of "real" factors to the left of the scree. With a Varimax rotation, an orthogonal rotation designed by Kaiser (1960), an interpretable four-factor solution emerged.

Guadagnoli and Velicer (as cited in Stevens, 1996) suggest that components are reliable when they have ten or more low (.40) loadings and when the sample size is greater than 150. For this principal components analysis, however, only factor loadings of .50 or greater were used for interpretation. A factor loading of .50 indicates that 25% of an item's variance is shared with the factor it is helping to name. While it might be considered somewhat conservative to use only loadings of .50 or higher, this allowed for the development of a 22-item short form of the instrument (see Appendix G). This short form was determined by the director of Parkland's developmental reading program to have an eighth-grade reading level, ideal for the population being evaluated. The four-factor solution that was chosen adopted the same factor labels used by Baker and Siryk: Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Personal-Emotional Adjustment, and Attachment (see Table 9.) These labels appeared to be concise descriptors for the factors, and also used language familiar to users of the original instrument.

A matrix of the intercorrelations of the four factors from the 56-item adaptation of the SACQ shows correlations from .24 to .51, and correlations between the subscales and the total score from .52 to .83 (see Table 10). These correlations were calculated after assigning the 56 items according to the "logical analysis" of the original instrument (refer to Appendix F.) When using the 22-item short form of the instrument, with items assigned according to the analysis of principal components, correlations generally were in the .17 to .36 range (see Table 11). A correlation of .068 between the new Academic and Social Adjustment factors was the only insignificant correlation. The factors were significantly correlated with the total

score, with correlations between .53 and .76. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients (see Table 12) were calculated for the four subscales and the full scale of the 22-item short form: .72 for Academic Adjustment, .65 for Social Adjustment, .75 for Personal-Emotional Adjustment, .76 for Attachment, and .80 for the Full Scale.

Table 9

Rotated Component Matrix: 56-Item Adaptation to 22-Item Short Form

Item number	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4
2	0.558			
3			0.511	
4				0.637
7	0.529			
12			.0635	
14		0.633		
15		0.515		
16			0.633	
17				0.593
20		0.549		
23	0.504			
24			0.672	
29		0.672		
31	0.523			
32			0.519	
38		0.501		
42	0.509			
44		0.593		
51		0.56		
52				0.616
53	0.681			
54				0.608

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; Component 1 = Personal-Emotional Adjustment; Component 2 = Attachment; Component 3 = Academic Adjustment; Component 4 = Social Adjustment.

Table 10

Correlation Matrix: Factors of 56-Item Adaptation of SACQ

Factor	Pers-Emot	Attach	Academic	Social	Total
Pers-Emot					
Pearson Correlation	1	.244**	.514**	.430**	.770**
Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0	0
N	230	214	204	177	152
Attachment					
Pearson Correlation	.244**	1	.492**	.339**	.526**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0		0	0	0
N	214	239	212	186	152
Academic					
Pearson Correlation	.514**	.492**	1	.451**	.833**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0		0	0
N	204	212	225	180	152
Social					
Pearson Correlation	.430**	.339**	.451**	1	.789**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0		0
N	177	186	180	197	152
Total					
Pearson Correlation	.770**	.526**	.833**	.789**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0	0	
N	152	152	152	152	152

Note. Correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11

Correlation Matrix: Factors of 22-Item Short Form of SACQ

Factor	Pers-Emot	Attach	Academic	Social	Total
Pers-Emot					
Pearson Correlation	1	.252**	.361**	.281**	.766**
Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0	0
N	248	235	241	245	227
Attachment					
Pearson Correlation	.252**	1	.341**	.173**	.667**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0		0	0.007	0
N	235	241	234	239	227
Academic					
Pearson Correlation	.361**	.341**	1	0.068	.654**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0		0.288	0
N	241	234	--	245	227
Social					
Pearson Correlation	.281**	.173**	0.068	1	.533**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.007	0.288		0
N	245	239	245	253	227
Total					
Pearson Correlation	.766**	.667**	.654**	.533**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0	0	
N	227	227	227	227	227

Note. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 12

Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) for 22- Item Short Form of SACQ

Reliability estimate	Academic	Social	Pers-Emot	Attachment	Total
Alpha	0.7218	0.6471	0.7547	0.7568	0.8018

Because the early examinations of the data suggested that the ISC II and III were behaving differently on the pre and post measures of the altered version of the SACQ, data for the two learning communities were not aggregated, but rather examined separately. While these smaller samples certainly reduced the likelihood of finding statistical significance, the value of being able to consider the differences of the two learning communities seemed to warrant this decision.

Adaptation and the ISC II. Repeated measures Analyses of Variance were used to compare ISC II students' pre and post scores with those of their CCS 098 comparison group (CCS 098 students in the regular curriculum). On the Academic Adjustment subscale, the pre-post comparisons did not indicate significant differences, but there were significant differences ($p = .03$) between the two groups when comparing how scores changed for each group over the course of the semester. While the Academic Adjustment scores of the ISC II students increased slightly, there was a drop in these scores for their comparison group. The pre and post comparisons for the Social Adjustment subscale yielded no statistically significant differences, but the ISC II students' scores again were observed to increase slightly. The comparison group's scores held steady. The Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscale scores again reflected no statistically significant differences between the groups, but this time the ISC II's scores held steady and the comparison group's scores decreased. This same pattern is seen again when comparing the two groups' Attachment subscale scores,

although there were significant group differences for Attachment, and the pre-post and interaction effects nearly showed statistical significance (see Tables 13 through 16 and Figures 5 through 8).

The Total score for this instrument showed no significant difference between the groups' pre-post scores, but nearly showed significance ($p = .06$) in the difference between the groups over the course of the semester. ISC II average Total scores increased 12 points, while the comparison group dropped 18 points (see Table 17 and Figure 9).

Table 13

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance for Pre-Post Scores (SACQ Adaptation): Academic Adjustment

Source	df	F	Sig.
ISC II & CCS 098			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.446	0.51
Error (group)	55	[742.586]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	1.384	0.24
Pre-post X group	1	4.672	0.04
Error (pre-post)	55	[143.108]	
ISCIII & CCS 099			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.148	0.7
Error (group)	60	[567.435]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	10.687	0.002
Pre-post X group	1	0.015	0.9
Error (pre-post)	60	[225.503]	

(table continues)

Table 13 (continued)

Source	df	F	Sig.
ISC II & ISC III			
Group (between subjects)	1	1.466	0.24
Error (group)	28	[747.703]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	1.172	0.29
Pre-post X group	1	2.804	0.105
Error (pre-post)	28	[244.508]	

Note. Values enclosed in brackets represent mean square errors.

Table 14

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance for Pre-Post Scores (SACQ Adaptation): Social Adjustment

Source	df	F	Sig.
ISC II & CCS 098			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.824	0.37
Error (group)	45	[562.17]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	1.485	0.23
Pre-post X group	1	1.185	0.28
Error (pre-post)	45	[104.672]	
ISCIII & CCS 099			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.002	0.97
Error (group)	48	[498.916]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	1.452	0.23
Pre-post X group	1	1.391	0.24
Error (pre-post)	48	[137.862]	

(table continues)

Table 14 (continued)

Source	df	F	Sig.
ISC II & ISC III			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.64	0.43
Error (group)	20	[571.573]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	0.064	0.8
Pre-post X group	1	5.085	0.035
Error (pre-post)	20	[84.923]	

Note. Values enclosed in brackets represent mean square errors.

Table 15

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance for Pre-Post Scores (SACQ Adaptation): Personal-Emotional Adjustment

Source	df	F	Sig.
ISC II & CCS 098			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.239	0.63
Error (group)	61	[640.932]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	1.673	0.2
Pre-post X group	1	1.479	0.23
Error (pre-post)	61	[120.045]	
ISCIII & CCS 099			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.075	0.785
Error (group)	60	[683.358]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	7.87	0.007
Pre-post X group	1	0.229	0.63

(table continues)

Table 15 (continued)

Source	df	F	Sig.
ISCIII & CCS 099 (continued)			
Error (pre-post)	60	[117.441]	
ISC II & ISC III			
Group (between subjects)	1	1.658	0.21
Error (group)	30	[777.59]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	1.753	0.196
Pre-post X group	1	1.606	0.215
Error (pre-post)	30	[137.029]	

Note. Values enclosed in brackets represent mean square errors.

Table 16

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance for Pre-Post Scores (SACQ Adaptation): Attachment

Source	df	F	Sig.
ISC II & CCS 098			
Group (between subjects)	1	7.091	0.01
Error (group)	69	[103.928]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	3.552	0.06
Pre-post X group	1	3.343	0.07
Error (pre-post)	69	[24.187]	
ISCIII & CCS 099			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.014	0.91
Error (group)	64	[101.149]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	2.784	0.1

(table continues)

Table 16 (continued)

Source	df	F	Sig.
ISCIII & CCS 099 (continued)			
Pre-post X group	1	3.842	0.054
Error (pre-post)	64	[33.063]	
ISC II & ISC III			
Group (between subjects)	1	3.991	0.055
Error (group)	31	[67.142]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	0.013	0.91
Pre-post X group	1	0.023	0.88
Error (pre-post)	31	[29.809]	

Note. Values enclosed in brackets represent mean square errors.

Table 17

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance for Pre-Post Scores (SACQ Adaptation): Total

Source	df	F	Sig.
ISC II & CCS 098			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.08	0.78
Error (group)	26	[6487.59]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	0.123	0.73
Pre-post X group	1	3.824	0.06
Error (pre-post)	26	[629.659]	
ISCIII & CCS 099			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.016	0.9
Error (group)	36	[4701.36]	

(table continues)

Table 17 (continued)

Source	df	F	Sig.
ISCIII & CCS 099 (continued)			
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	13.503	0.001
Pre-post X group	1	0.168	0.685
Error (pre-post)	36	[1015.205]	
ISC II & ISC III			
Group (between subjects)	1	0.563	0.47
Error (group)	14	[7456.797]	
Pre-post (within subjects)	1	1.432	0.25
Pre-post X group	1	6.289	0.025
Error (pre-post)	14	[707.45]	

Note. Values enclosed in brackets represent mean square errors.

Explanations from the qualitative data. In speculating about these patterns of little or no increase in scores, or even drops in scores, one is confronted with the question of how students could report being less adjusted to the college environment after having a semester's experience with that environment. A look at the qualitative data might shed some light on this question. Certainly, issues of student preparedness for the college environment came up time and time again during faculty and student interviews and observations.

One of the most frequent concerns expressed by ISC faculty members was the erratic attendance of many students. Explanations for the attendance difficulties were varied. Some students reported unstable arrangements for housing, transportation, and child care. Others found the 9:00 a.m. start time too early. Students (not all, but many) were observed to drag in one by one during the first hour or two of class. The faculty members attempted to keep in

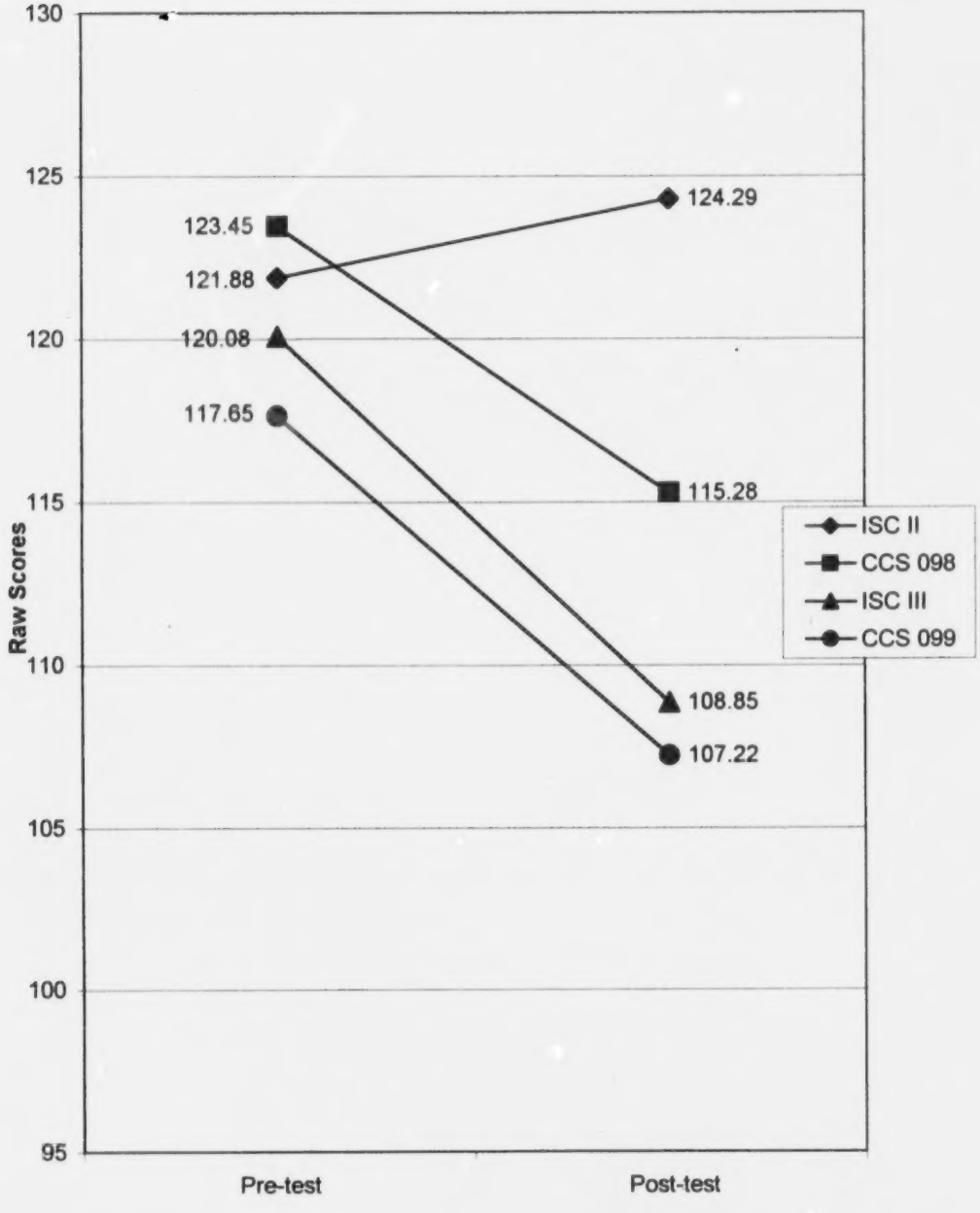

Figure 5. Pre and post scores on academic adjustment factor (Adapted version of Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire).

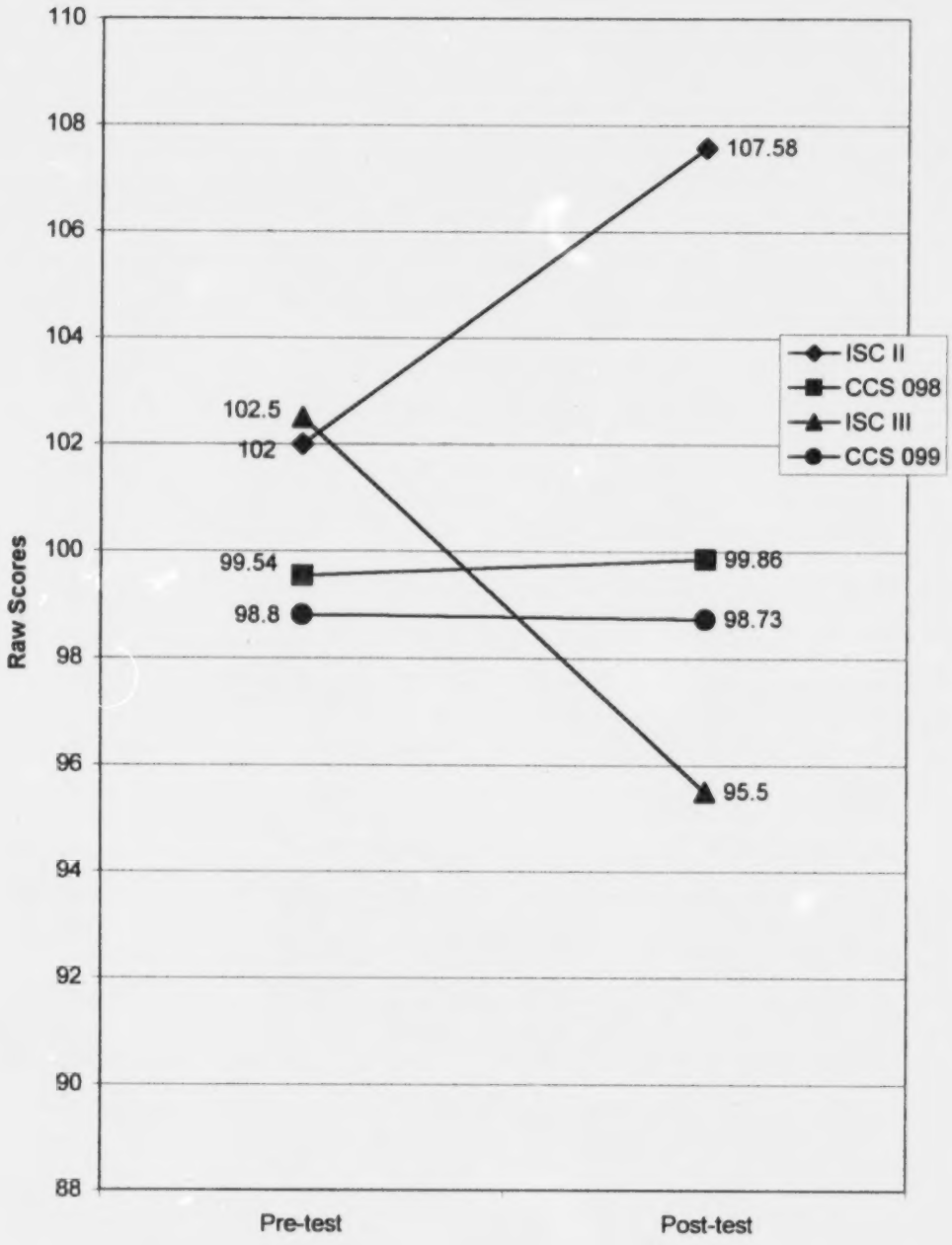

Figure 6. Pre and post scores on social adjustment factor (Adapted version of Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire).

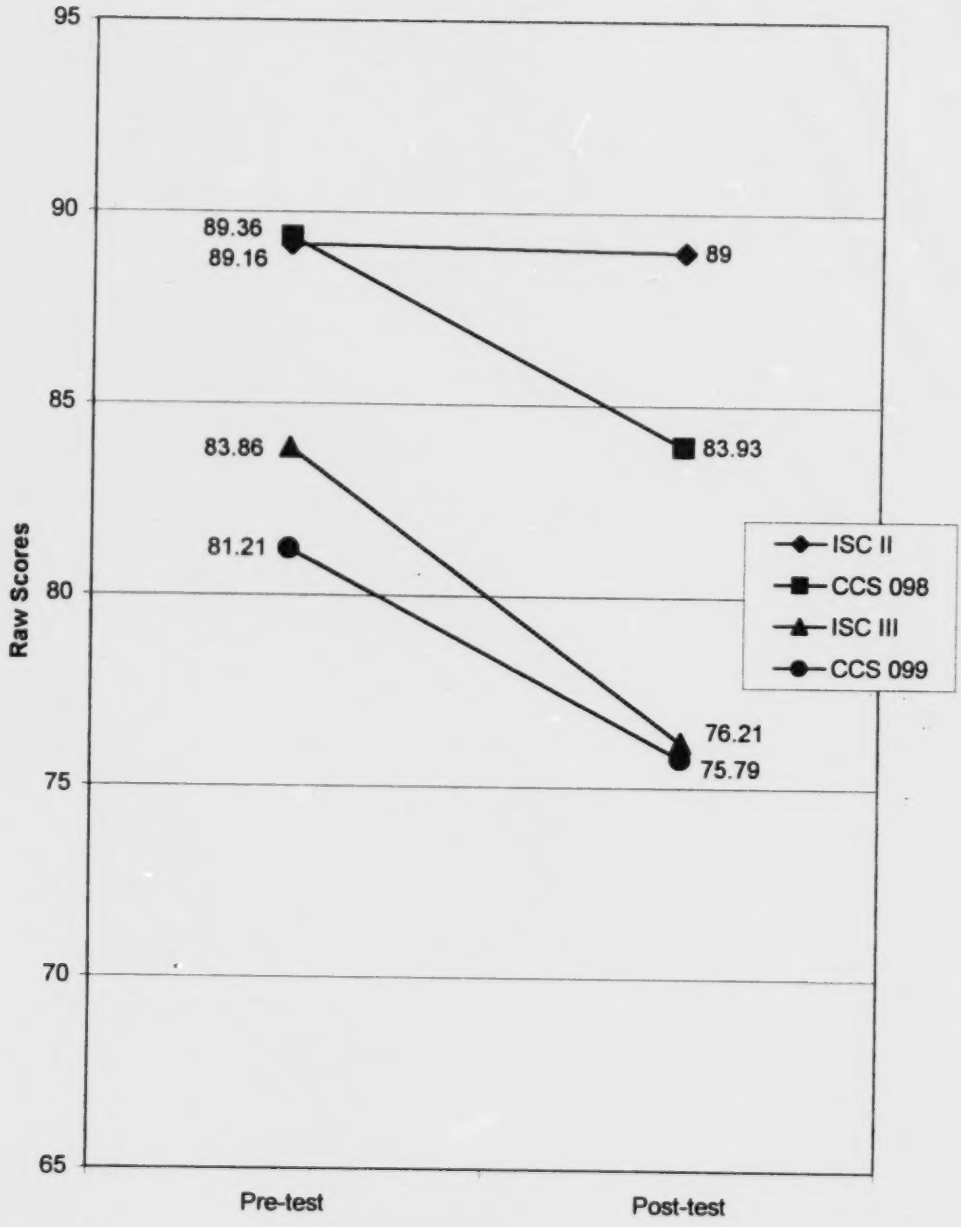

Figure 7. Pre and post scores on personal-emotional adjustment factor (Adapted version of Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire).

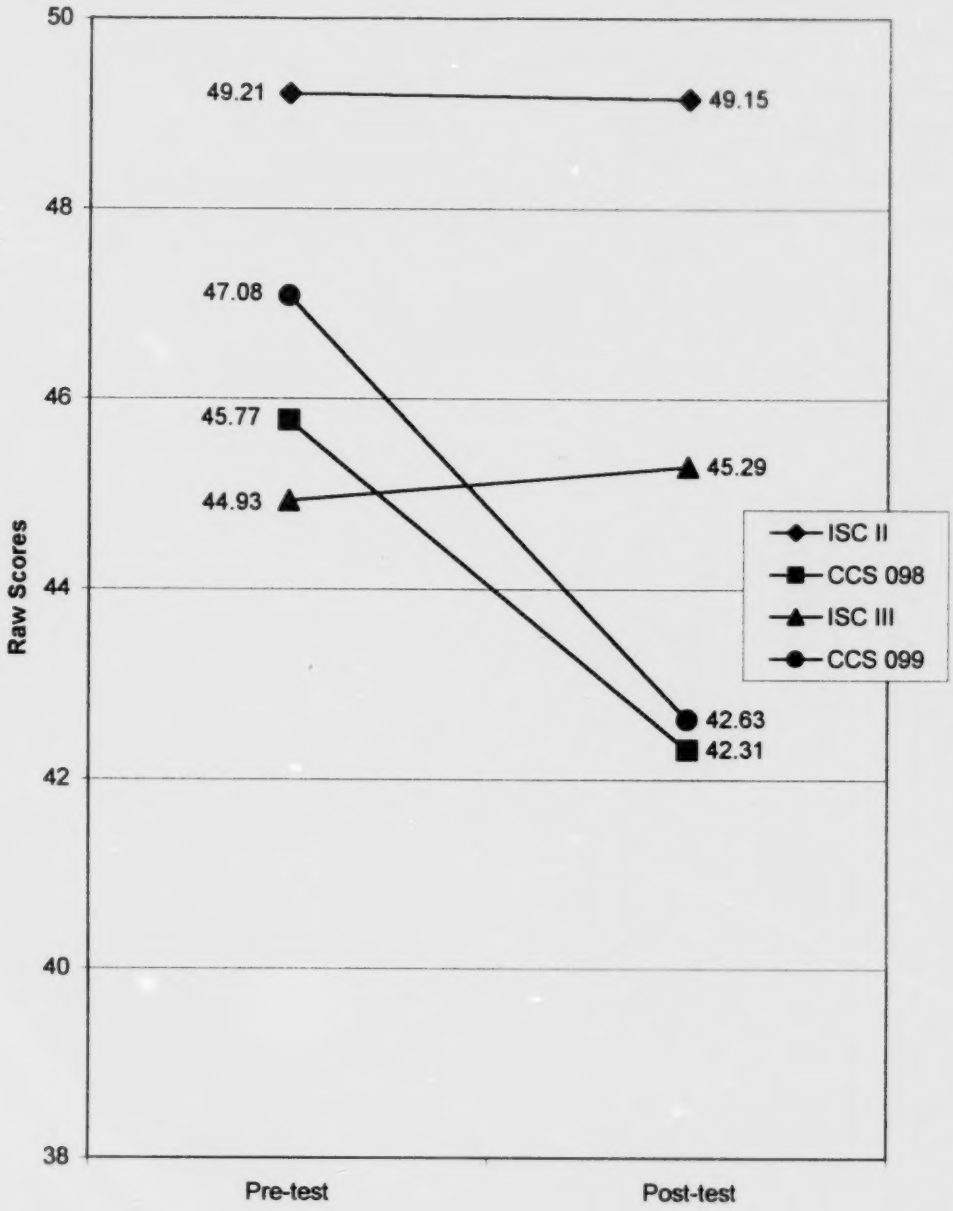

Figure 8. Pre and post scores on attachment factor (Adapted version of Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire).

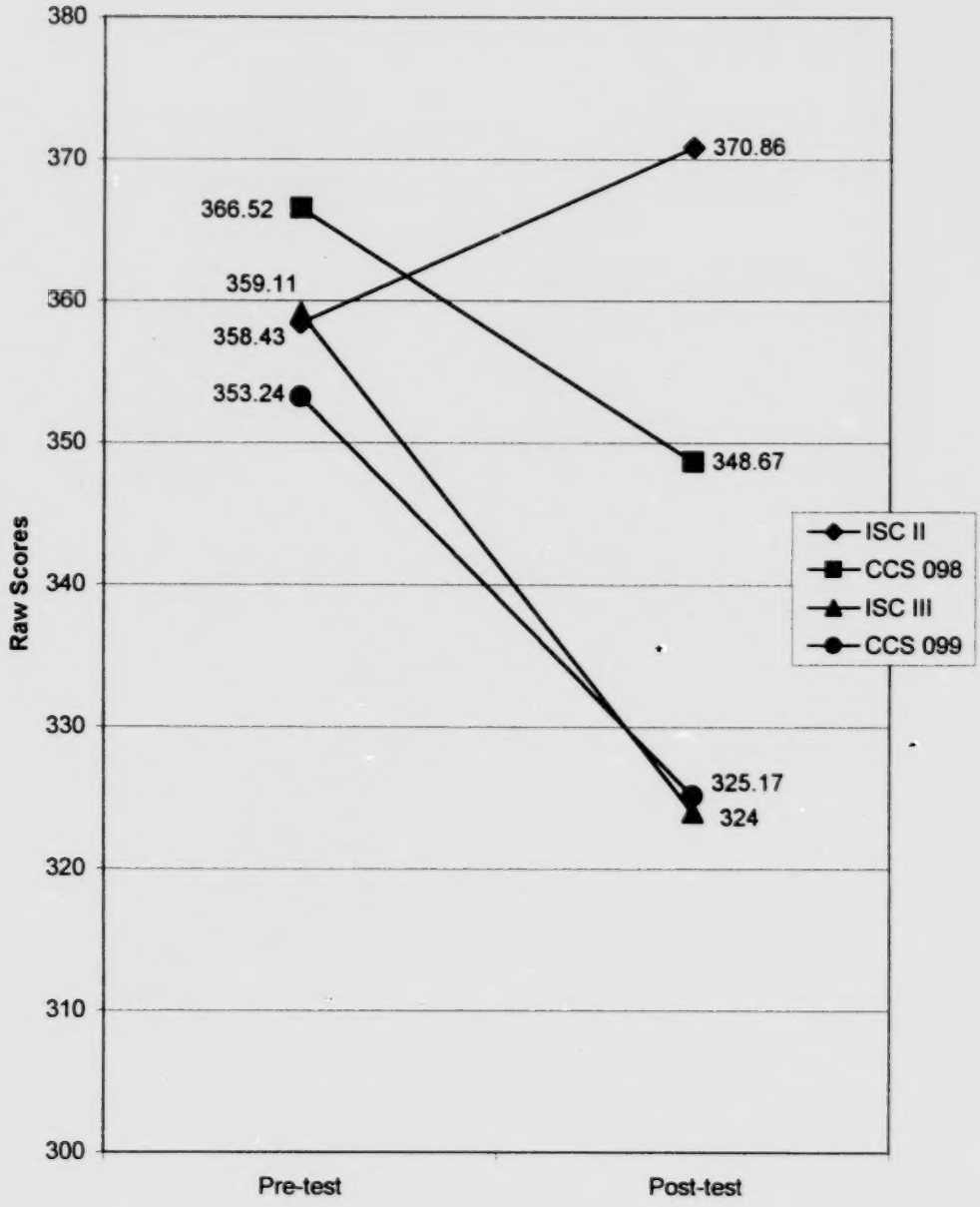

Figure 9. Pre and post total scores (Adapted version of Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire).

close touch with students, and certainly showed sensitivity to the students' individual situations, but could not consistently effect changes in attendance and participation. The following, from faculty interviews, are examples of the ISC faculty's expressed concerns about their students:

It seemed like such a sharp group at first. Some of the students seemed depressed. Even the students that we had to ask to withdraw said, "This was great." From our perspective it was not a successful school experience for them. From their perspective it was better than anything in their past. Their academic background is characterized by deficit. I ran into a student from last spring's ISC. He was talking about how nothing was ever expected of him in high school. He was quiet and well-mannered, so was overlooked. We thought he might have a learning disability. Now I question that. This semester he scored well into college level reading on the assessment.

> They have trouble making the connection that they have to work outside the community. One student says he sleeps half of the day, then spends the rest playing video games and watching TV. He's smart, but he's not making the connection.
>
> I heard one student from the dorm talk about drinking 19 shots. Maybe he was exaggerating. Two of the students seem to be drinking partners. They sometimes arrive in the morning and they already have been drinking hard liquor.

Student responses on questionnaires and in interviews give further indications of their preparedness for college:

> There's too much work at one time.
>
> I wish we had less work–like typed papers.
>
> I wish we had not so many papers and quizzes, and just more inside school work.
>
> There should be less homework.
>
> We have too much math homework.

It should be noted that some students chided those complaining of work loads:

Y'all just like it too "babyfied." This is college, not junior high!

The consistent patterns found across the SACQ adaptation's factors might suggest that the ISC students and their counterparts in the CCS comparison groups entered college naïve about expectations for college students. After being confronted with the social and academic demands of the college classroom, they perhaps gave more realistic self-reports at the time of the post-test. While not always significant statistically, the consistent trend was for the ISC II students' scores to hold steady or even increase somewhat, while their comparison group's scores dropped or held steady (see Figures 5 through 9). A plausible explanation is that the support of the learning community structure offered a veritable life raft to students frequently thrown overboard, or who are, at the least, likely to feel buffeted about in the unfamiliar seas of higher education.

Adaptation and the ISC III. The repeated measures ANOVAs described earlier were used to compare the pre and posttests of the SACQ adaptation completed by students in the ISC III and their CCS 099 comparison group in the regular curriculum. On the Academic Adjustment subscale, both groups performed similarly, with significant pre-post differences and scores dropping for both groups. No statistically significant differences were noted on the Social Adjustment subscale for either group, although in this case, the ISC III students' scores did appear to drop more than those of their comparison group. On the subscale measuring Personal-Emotional adjustment, there were significant pre-post differences. Both the ISC III students and their CCS 099 comparison group had scores that dropped over the course of the semester, although there were not significant differences between the two groups. The Attachment subscale showed the groups performing differently ($p = .05$) from each other, with the ISC III students' scores increasing slightly and the comparison group

dropping. Both the ISC II and ISC III had strong showings on the Attachment subscale when contrasted with their comparison groups, a finding consistent with the ISC students' higher rates of enrollment in subsequent semesters.

The Total scores for this instrument showed no significant difference between the performance of the two groups, but did show a statistically significant pre-post difference, with the ISC III average score dropping 34 points and the comparison group dropping 28. The consistent trends seen when comparing the ISC II students with their CCS 098 comparison group were not evident when comparing the ISC III students' scores with those of their CCS 099 counterparts.

Comparing ISC II with ISC III. In comparing the two groups' performance on the Academic Adjustment subscale, no statistically significant differences were noted. ISC II scores, however, did increase slightly from pre to post while the ISC III scores dropped. The groups did behave differently ($p = .03$) on the Social Adjustment subscale, however, with the ISC II students again showing an increase from pre to post and the ISC III scores dropping. No statistically significant differences were evident on the Personal-Emotional subscale; the ISC II average, however, held steady while the ISC III average score dropped. Both groups held fairly steady from pre to post on the Attachment subscale with no significant differences between the two groups.

When looking at the Total score for the SACQ adaptation, the groups did perform in significantly different ways ($p = .02$), with the ISC II students' scores increasing 12 points on average and those of the ISC III students decreasing 34 points over the course of the semester. As mentioned earlier, the tendency for both ISC groups to score higher on the Attachment factor than their comparison groups does appear to correspond with the generally higher re-enrollment rates seen from these groups in subsequent semesters. In

general, however, the results from this instrument suggest that being in a learning community provides more adaptation benefits to ISC II students than to those in ISC III (see Tables 13 through 17 and Figures 5 through 9).

Classroom Assessment Techniques

Several of the ISC instructors used brief Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) (Angelo & Cross, 1993) from time to time to explore issues related to student adjustment and adaptation: study habits, self care, attendance and participation, and so forth. CATs were used at the discretion of individual instructors, so these particular qualitative measures were not used in this evaluation in any standardized way. Nevertheless, the following feedback was collected in the spring of 1999 from students who were enrolled in an Integrated Studies Community in the fall of 1998. The students' anonymous, written comments indicate how they saw their adjustment to college enhanced by their ISC enrollment.

> I'm more motivated to know what I want to do and be in life.
>
> The ISC has been a great help to me–[I] learned several study strategies, how to best take notes, write papers–and it's been easier for me to make more friends.
>
> I feel that the ISC class was very helpful to me, and now I feel more aware of how to handle the textbook and take notes. I also feel that when I do have a question, I do not need to be quiet. What I have done in this semester's classes is ask questions.
>
> A lot of teachers keep talking about stuff that I learned last semester. I know what they're talking about.
>
> I feel that being in a group taught me to ask questions and not be scared.
>
> Everything I do now, the way I feel, I owe half to my instructors that I had in the fall and the rest I owe to my parents for not giving up on me. This year I plan to do better in everything I participate in. Maybe because now I have confidence.

In significant breaks with college policy, students in the ISCs were enrolled in college-level classes to which they normally would not have access. ISC III students were enrolled in an introductory psychology class that normally requires an ENG 101 (college-level writing) placement. In an even greater split from the college's guidelines, ISC II students were enrolled in an introductory literature class, another course requiring an ENG 101 placement in the regular curriculum.

LIT 120

Students from the fall ISC II and from a regular LIT 120 class were asked to write literary analyses of two short stories, "Girl" and "Barbie-Q." One analysis was written during the third week of the fall semester, and the other was completed at the end. During the third week 37 students completed analyses (23 from the ISC II, 14 from the regular curriculum); 31 students (17 from the ISC II, 14 from the regular LIT 120 class) wrote the end-of-the-semester analyses.

The students' analyses were scrambled and given to three members of Parkland's English composition faculty. These raters assigned scores to each analysis using a five-point scale (1 being "poor" and 5 being "excellent"), judging the mechanics and clarity of writing as well as the quality of the formal analysis. Eighty-eight percent of the time, all three scores assigned to an analysis were within one point of each other, but there was 100% agreement on only 22% of the papers.

Analyses written during the third week of the semester by ISC II students received an average rating of 1.8. Those written by students in the regular LIT 120 class received an

average rating of 2.8. At the end of the semester, the ISC II analyses again received an average rating of 1.8, while the regular LIT 120 ratings rose slightly to an average of 3.1. While ISC II faculty expressed some disappointment in these results, it should be remembered that these comparisons are between students at very different points in their academic development. While the ISC II students have placed into ENG 098 and 099, students in regular LIT 120 classes must be eligible for ENG 101, and some have completed their composition requirements completely. Additionally, students who elect to take literature electives in the regular curriculum frequently seem more academically motivated than many students at the college.

The following excerpt is taken from an analysis written at the end of the semester by a student in ISC II. This student's analysis received a rating of "2" from all three raters. The story being discussed is "Barbie-Q," which addresses issues of gender and class in the tale of little girls acquiring Barbie dolls in a warehouse fire sale:

> From my understanding instead of them getting the better quality barbie they have to settle for the ones that smell like smoke when you hold them over your nose, after they have repeatedly washed them. I guess these girls always run across the better things in life, and sometimes that could be hard. When you see that other people has the more valueable [sic], and material things in life, we tend to get jealous and talk about them until you can better understand your situation.

In comparison, the next excerpt, which received ratings of "5" from all three raters, was drawn from an analysis written by a student in the regular LIT 120 class:

> The characters in this story are obviously growing up in a poor environment. . . .The fact that each one of the characters possesses only one doll symbolizes how poor they really are. . . . The fact that the children act out the same story about Barbie stealing the other doll's boyfriend sort of indicates the lifestyle that these children are exposed to. . . . At the end of the story the children are looking at other dolls that are damaged from a fire in the warehouse. They realize that these are the only barbies that they can afford and so they rationalize about the condition of the barbies in order to make the best out of [a] bad situation just so that they can be happy for what they have and for what they can afford to get.

While both students demonstrate insight about the story's basic message, and while both analyses might lack a certain elegance, the ISC student is described (by a member of the English faculty) as "less thorough as well as less adept with the conventions of literary analysis . . . [the student] doesn't get it said as clearly as would be ideal and also fails to express a position that would be as critical as we English teachers hope our students will be . . ." The faculty member further noted that students from both groups did not "take a step back to speculate that the story questions the very value of Barbie, as well as the enormous gulf between this commercial image of Barbie (and of TV, popular commodities in general) and the lives of most people."

In the spring of 1999, ISC II students again wrote literary analyses that were compared with analyses written by students taking LIT 120 in the regular curriculum. The instructor, however, chose to substitute the stories "Prue" by Alice Munro and "The Hand" by Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette for the two stories used during the pilot and fall implementations. The analyses of "Prue" were written at midterm; analyses of "The Hand" were completed at the end of the semester. Ten students from the ISC II wrote the midterm analyses while 20 in the regular curriculum completed the assignment. At the end of the semester, seven students in the ISC II wrote an analysis of "The Hand." Sixteen students in the regular LIT 120 class wrote this analysis.

Because faculty interrater agreement was so low on the judgments of the Spring 1999 analyses, the numbers cannot be used as meaningful representations of quality. Four faculty raters judged the analyses, but only 40% of the students writing "Prue" analyses received all four ratings within one point of each other (on the five-point scale), and only 37% of the students writing analyses of "The Hand" received similarly consistent ratings. Only one essay from each group received the same rating from all four raters. A look at samples of the

students' writing, however, can help illustrate the differences in student performance between the ISC and regular LIT 120 groups. One ISC faculty member noted that some ISC students seemed to "get" the symbolism, but lacked confidence or conventional skills in presenting their points. "Others," this instructor wrote, "seem to be having trouble negotiating the symbolism on some subtle level–and often tend to seek 'good' and 'bad', and 'happy endings' or 'morals', rather than something subtler."

The following is taken from an analysis of "The Hand" written by an ISC II student. While the deficits in writing are apparent, the student does have some idea of the symbolism in the story:

> The hand bring up an important. What does it symbolize? Well, it could symbolize a lot of things. So, as I thought about it, there is one line that stick out is that month later they got married. So I think that "the hand" signals a telling moment in the life of a young bride, or can be something else. But that signals that she weary of him at first, or maybe the attraction and then getting married so quick was not right for her in this situation.

The following excerpt is from another ISC II student, one who has gleaned only a notion of the symbolism, instead offering a fairly concrete interpretation of the story:

> The wife seems to be trying to break through not really knowing her husband and getting used to him is more of a problem for the young wife . . .
>
> The way the wife defines marriage is significant because she calls it scandalous. So she knew what she was getting into before they got married . . .
>
> It's symbolic that the hand is the issue in this story. The hand disturbed the wife because of its size. It made her think of illusional things that were horrible and ridiculous.

One of the stronger analyses from the regular LIT 120 class contained the following material:

> "The Hand" by Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette shows (in a brief two pages) the chronology of the stages a woman can experience in a marriage . . .
>
> This couple courted only briefly and they are still newlyweds. The author immediately lets the reader know that something is not quite right, as she uses words such as "adolescent" to describe the young wife's back, married life as "scandalous,"

> and this state of marriage as a "kidnapping." She is very naïve and may have had little preparation for married life.

Some students in the regular LIT 120 class also struggled with the symbolism of the story, yielding instead to more literal interpretations. This student further assumes that the author is the female character in "The Hand," although the story is not told in the first person:

> I think this is symbolizing that the author obviously did not know this man well enough before she married him. They had only met for a month before they married and if they would have known each other longer, she would have noticed this feature. If the author really does love this man, she should be able to overcome this disgust of her new husband's hand.

This last example, taken from an analysis written by a regular LIT 120 student, shows that the ISC II students did not hold a monopoly on spelling, grammar, and punctuation difficulties:

> This present the conflict of the story, I believe she has just realized how much she doesn't know this man and yet she has married him what can she do. She can do absolutly [sic] nothing that is the problem. . . A possible theme would most likely be that of her jumping so quickly into something she thought she need got her something she wasn't barganing [sic] for maybe the phrase look before you leap would come into play.

The most dramatic differences between the two groups of LIT 120 students were seen in the writing assignments. Classroom discussions, on the other hand, were observed to be insightful and engaging from both groups of students. The following scenario is of the ISC II at midterm during the spring of 1999. The students were to have read "The Glass Menagerie."

"I still haven't read 'The Glass Menagerie,'" announces one young woman. One instructor informs me that six of these students have F averages in LIT 120 at midterm. The literature instructor begins the class discussion: "What is a menagerie?" "Why would Laura collect something fragile?" "Because SHE is!" call out several students. Some of the students

point out that a glass menagerie collection isn't useful. Another student addresses the issue of Laura collecting something that isn't useful, asking, "Is that because she feels that way because of her leg?" This instructor is able to get excellent participation from most of the students—those who have read the story, no doubt—in discussing this work. She and the students spend a good bit of time identifying the external and internal conflicts of the main characters. They further discuss the contextual elements (poverty, the 1930s, the Great Depression) affecting the three main characters. One bewildered young man has been taking copious notes throughout this discussion, apparently hoping that this will help make up for his lack of preparation before class. "Is this gonna be on the test?" he asks.

PSY 101

Many ISC II students were in English composition classes at least two levels below that of students in the regular LIT 120 classes. ISC III students frequently were only one level below that of the regular PSY 101 students. While no ISC III students earned final PSY 101 grades of A during the fall of 1998, and only two from the spring ISC III group earned As, students generally seemed to engage with the content and feel successful in this class. While some faculty members wondered if the difficulty of LIT 120 could be considered appropriate for the ISC II students, ISC III faculty considered PSY 101 quite workable in their mix of classes with their students.

Reading Levels

End-of-the-semester reading scores, as measured by the Gates-McGinitie (1978), were used to compare students in the ISCs with the daytime sample of students in CCS 098 and 099 in the regular curriculum. This comparison, of course, only allows comparisons between

persisters (those still around at the end of the semester to complete the posttest). The averages reported combine data from the Fall 1998 and Spring 1999 semesters.

The average reading grade-level pretest score for ISC II students was 7.75, while that of their CCS 098 comparison group was 8.16. It appears that, if anything, some of the weaker CCS 098 readers might have been enrolled in the ISC II. ISC II students' posttests indicate an average increase of 1.5 grade-levels over the course of one semester, with an average posttest score of 9.28. Their comparison group increased about one-half of a grade-level, with 8.73 being that group's average posttest score. Because the reading scores of CCS 098 students are, by definition, extreme scores, one would expect some regression toward the mean at re-test for both groups. One would not, however, expect to see such large differences between the two groups by chance. The increased reading scores for the ISC II students was the largest change seen in pre-post reading scores during the 1998-99 implementation.

ISC III students and their CCS 099 comparison group had similar reading pretest scores (10.11 for ISC III and 10.17 for the comparison group). Average ISC III reading scores actually decreased over the course of a semester, with 9.4 being the average posttest score for those students. Their comparison group increased nearly one-half of a grade-level, with an average reading grade-level posttest score of 10.63 (see Figure 10). The reading pre-post comparisons indicated another area in which the benefits of the learning community seemed greatest for the ISC II level students.

Student Perceptions of Advantages and Disadvantages

During observations and interviews, on Classroom Assessment Techniques and writing assignments used by the instructors, and on an anonymous survey administered at the end of the semester, students were able to express their thoughts about any benefits or

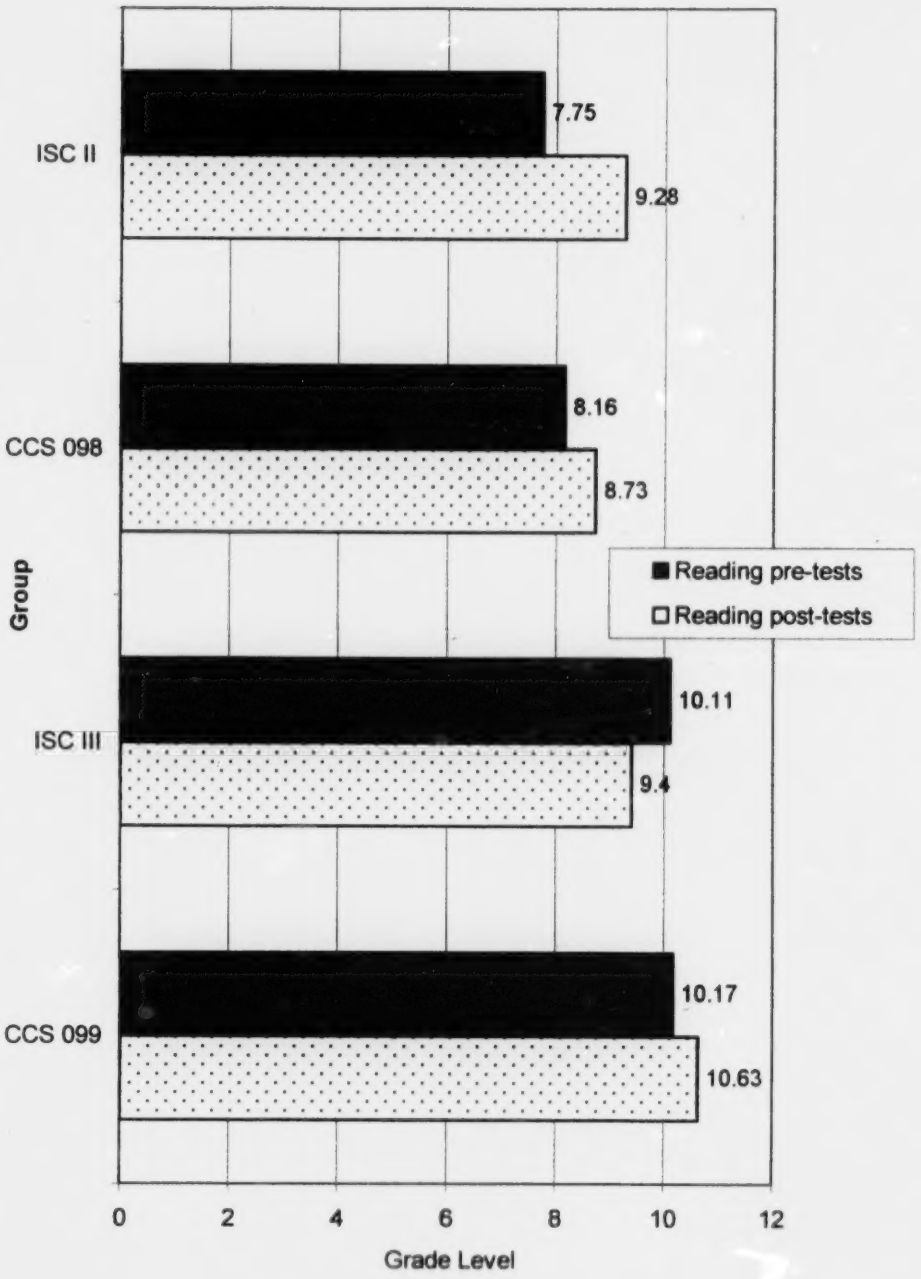

Figure 10. Pre and post grade-level reading scores (Gates-MacGinitie, 1978).

disadvantages of being a student in an ISC. The qualitative data collected from these many sources were sorted into the following themes: teacher-student relationships; integration of course content; social aspects; academic rigor; and intellectual engagement and development.

Teacher-Student Relationships

Many of the students described how much access they had to their instructors, and explained that their experiences with ISC instructors were unlike their earlier educational experiences. Getting to know instructors well and receiving a great deal of individual attention were recurring themes in student comments:

> The teachers explain things. They come to you--they read your facial expression before you even ask. They make a point of making sure no one's left behind.
>
> They've all given phone numbers at work and home. There's more access than there was to teachers in high school.
>
> You're able to have conferences one on one. When you do group work, there are more teachers to help. When I had a paper due in LIT 120, the writing teacher went over it for me and helped me make good corrections. You get to ask which teacher can help you with certain things.
>
> This is a good group of teachers. They care about you. They make it fun to learn. It's easy to talk to them.
>
> Being around the teachers as much as we did, we all became a little family.
>
> These teachers enjoy being here. Once we had a sub and he was terrible.
>
> I changed my mind dramatically over the semester. At first I thought one of the instructors had an attitude. You've got to get to know her to understand her. She really cares.

Integration of Course Content

Most students found the integration of course material enhanced their understanding, but some found it confusing:

The subjects fit together. Our CCS assignments always go with psychology.

I like the idea that the subjects run together. The work you do for one teacher also is work for another.

I like the way they all teach on one topic. You're more likely to understand.

The classes all run together. You don't know what you'll do at a certain time. The teachers change what they're doing.
Sometimes I don't know which teacher's folder the papers should go into.

I'd like a regular, weekly routine.

Some of the students wished for more choices of learning community structures at the college:

I think you could have organized it for more students in all areas of the school. For example, an ISC for health careers, business careers, etc., since all of these majors usually need the same classes.

Social Aspects

Most students thought there were social advantages to the ISCs, but others felt isolated:

It really helps with friendships. We swapped numbers.

The ISC teaches you to be independent.

We're tight. We wouldn't say things that might hurt the other students.

It's a good way for freshmen to get used to college – adjusted and settled in. It's a clearer path into college.

I study and focus better over here. There are too many distractions in the main building.

If we were more in the school–if we could see the big campus on breaks–we'd do it again. We're not familiar with the big building. [A theme heard from several ISC II students who met in the D Building, a classroom building separate from the wings of the main building, during the fall semester.]

It gets boring to see the same three rooms.

Academic Rigor

From interviews it was learned that many students found the academic work more rigorous than they anticipated. Most seemed to consider it good preparation for future semesters, but also relevant outside of class:

> There are memory techniques we've learned that I apply at work. The CCS techniques really do work.
>
> We've noticed lots of vocabulary building and punctuation work in the ISC. I'll hear a word in a movie I never knew before, and now I know what it means.
>
> I failed the first test. I learned my lesson. I have to ask more questions and take more notes. I realized it wasn't just a reading comprehension problem – that some students were taking better notes. I didn't understand three of the stories, so I should have asked more questions.
>
> I was surprised at the amount of reading at first, but I adapted. There's a big difference from high school. I'm actually learning and applying it! This wasn't true in high school.
>
> Basically, my high school counselors kept me away from math. I was in athletics, and math wasn't my strong suit. Now I'm paying the price.
>
> It's really hard to get an A on a writing assignment. There are lots of papers. Big ones. It took awhile to get used to that much writing.

Intellectual Engagement and Development

Although students did not state it directly, they gave evidence in their interviews that they were beginning to learn how knowledge is constructed in a scholarly community, and that they had taken a step away from intellectually naïve, dualistic thinking:

> In the poetry unit I learned that there isn't a wrong answer. You get your own opinion if you can support it.
>
> The class gets you motivated. If the teachers don't get you motivated, the class will. I love class.
>
> There's no sleeping in the class. If you doze off, you miss stuff.

As they began to show more sophistication in connecting course material to their own experiences, the students expressed overwhelmingly positive opinions about the LIT 120 and PSY 101 classes:

> I use the definitions we learn. It makes me sound smart – like I might say something's "ironic."
>
> I really liked "Raisin in the Sun."
>
> We all liked studying Shakespeare. The teacher breaks it down so you'll understand it.

Similarly, many of the students appreciated the skill-building from their composition, reading, and mathematics courses. These feelings, however, were not expressed across the board:

> I wish I never had to take math.
>
> There should be less "busy work" in CCS. Too much marking and underlining.
>
> I don't see the point of the writing class. It feels like going back to third grade.

Some of the more compelling evidence of individual student development over the course of the semester came from papers submitted to the ORN 101 instructor at the end of the semester. Two examples follow:

> In high school I never took notes or studied for tests because I didn't want to and I didn't know an effective way to do those things to pass. Since being in ORN I have developed new effective ways to study and take tests, and my attitude has changed extremely towards going to school. In high school I was always late and sometimes didn't go, but now school is fun and exciting and I never want to miss class.
>
> In high school I always got in trouble for skipping or being late and that was the main reason I did it, but after being in college, I found I don't get in trouble and that took some of the fun out of it. I find myself getting up in time and completing my homework completely and giving some thought in my answer, not just finding the answer in the text. Goal setting and planning really helped me out a lot. At first I had no idea what I wanted from college, but now I know what I want to do in college and what courses I need to take in order to get my degree.
>
> In high school I thought my teachers hated me and that's why I always got poor grades, but after hearing about "I Create It All" (a concept taught in ORN 101), it got

me wondering if maybe it was my fault and I should have taken more time to do a more effective job on homework as well as tests.

I gained self-esteem and direction, I believe that honestly in my heart. When I started class I was so lost, I didn't know who I was. I was so insecure. After reading a couple of chapters, and listening to a couple of lectures from the teacher, I felt like I could be somebody just like her. You were so full of energy (addressing the instructor), and at 19 years old at the beginning of the semester, I felt old and worn out. You gave me so much hope for the future by watching you. Then our class assignments helped me figure out what I wanted to be, and it helped me find out what are some of my best qualities.

Student Survey

An anonymous survey questionnaire was given to the ISC students and their comparison groups at the end of each semester. Students were asked to compare their experiences at Parkland College during that semester with earlier educational experiences. Responses from the two groups of students were compared on the 21 items of this questionnaire using independent t-tests. Significant differences ($p = .05$) between the two groups were found on the following items, with ISC students significantly more likely than the comparison group to endorse them:

I got to know my classmates better.

People of different backgrounds and races got along better.

Classmates were more likely to help me with school work.

A significant difference ($p = .05$) also was found on the following item, with ISC students less likely to endorse it:

I earned poorer grades.

With a significance level raised to .10, ISC students also were more likely to endorse the following item:

These classmates were nicer.

At the .10 level of significance, ISC students were less likely to endorse the following:

I didn't fit in as well.

These classes were less interesting.

People didn't get along as well.

These classes had more complicated subject matter.

Faculty Perceptions of Advantages and Disadvantages

All ISC II and III faculty members were interviewed individually, around midterm or later, during the fall of 1998 and spring of 1999. Frequent informal conversations took place during classroom observations and other campus meetings. An anonymous survey questionnaire was administered to all ISC faculty members at the end of each semester, as well as to those faculty members teaching the same classes in the regular curriculum.

Despite frequent reports of exhaustion, there was quite strong agreement from both groups of ISC faculty that they would like to teach in an ISC for another semester. The Fall 1998 ISC II faculty group included three instructors that had taught during the Spring 1998 pilot implementation. Two of these instructors went on to teach in the ISC II in the spring of 1999 as well. The same four ISC III instructors taught in the ISC III both semesters of the 1998-99 academic year. The qualitative data collected from all of these instructors perhaps can be grouped under three sub-headings: institutional support; student development issues; and instruction/management issues.

These issues included topics such as facilities, access to various student support services, and scheduling and resources for field trips and special events. Some of the needs identified in the fall were, in fact, met before the spring semester was underway. The ISC III instructors, for example, were pleased about a number of changes, facilitated by the chair of the Humanities Department, that were made for the Spring 1999 semester: they were housed within one classroom; they changed to a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule; and their students had a reserved hour in a computer lab.

The Tuesday-Thursday-Friday schedule in the fall was too erratic for students. They had a three-day weekend, and we got decreased participation and attendance on Tuesday.

Student Mentors

ISC instructors also were pleased by the increased involvement of two paid student mentors. These individuals called students in an attempt to get them more involved in the community and to address attendance difficulties, and assisted in the computer lab and with mathematics activities. Some of the instructors thought that the student mentors could have been of even greater assistance if they had been able to be in the classroom more. As one faculty member explained, "The students don't understand someone trying to make an intervention from the outside." A student assistant initially was hired to work at a study table, but was not utilized by the students. This service was discontinued.

Recruitment

ISC III faculty members, in particular, were concerned about the recruitment of

students for their community. The challenge seemed to be in finding students that not only wanted to be in the learning community, but also matched on three assessments (reading, writing, and math), and found these courses to be in line with their academic or career goals. Still, ISC III instructors were unhappy to be scrambling at the eleventh hour in an attempt to fill their community, and asked for more aggressive recruitment strategies.

Other Student Services

Instructors from both communities expressed difficulty in coordinating services for their students with diagnosed or suspected disabilities. At times this was due to an individual student choosing to keep his or her diagnosis private. At other times, students' erratic attendance or refusal of services impeded coordination. Throughout the year, instructors from both ISC II and III were frustrated that their students were not considered eligible for assistance through the Trio/Student Support Services program:

> If these students don't qualify, then who does?
>
> We had assumed that Trio would be involved. They're not. We need someone (a counselor or advisor) identified.

Other Support

Instructors expressed some interest in offering field trips and other enriching on-campus opportunities to the students, but were not aware of how they would be scheduled, who would do the scheduling, or what funds were available. There were assumptions, it seemed, that someone outside of the ISC faculty would assume responsibility for these activities.

> Who was to program them? We assumed that someone more experienced would take charge there. We thought of going to a volleyball game, but never got it scheduled.

We all have a fantasy of how great it would be to take them to a show off-campus. Nighttime activities are a problem. If we could get some productions here during the school day, we might be able to get them to attend. They don't stay around campus much.

I feel let down. There are no organized activities for the ISC students if we don't do it, and we don't have time to do it. We were supposed to have speakers.

There's not help in organizing activities or trips. Do we have money? There's so much to cover in the curriculum that it's hard to take two hours off to do a field trip.

Student Development

Instructors were challenged as they tried to coach students toward engaging in more adaptive behaviors, while also being sensitive to the realities of the students' lives outside of class. In addition to the attendance issues discussed earlier, there were ongoing concerns about time management, organization, and self-discipline. The following statements from faculty interviews are representative of some of their major concerns about the ISC students:

These students have lots of organizational challenges. They don't bring their notes, keep things a mess, and lose things, even though we provided them with notebooks, dividers, and a hole-puncher.

My feeling is that we might only have two students who would have passed these classes in the regular curriculum.

They're recognizing the attitudes and behaviors they need to do to be successful students. They're usually attending and usually on time. They're acknowledging problems with their behaviors. Their attitudes are improving, but their behavior hasn't changed.

If they're late, they usually miss my class. If I try to talk with them, there's a lot of hostility–like they think you're not willing to help them. Where's enabling and where's supporting? We need to be careful not to enable them to continue being underprepared students.

If they're not prepared to be students, they're probably not prepared in other areas of their lives. This probably is why a lot of them have chaotic lives. They don't connect behavior and consequences. They don't take responsibility–either for owning their failures or taking credit for their successes.

> Two of the students live at Robeson Hall. The dorm is so rowdy and a very distracting experience. It's loud all night. The students say it's impossible to study in their rooms. If there are two students coming in really tired and unable to stay awake in class, it will be the two who live at the dorm.

Despite these concerns, instructors consistently referred to the students as "bright" and as "good kids." They described students that had "bonded" with classmates, and that were "not defensive" or fearful around each other:

> They're a bright, witty group. They're real nice to each other on the whole. It's nice seeing the race relations. They seem to enjoy each other--get a kick out of each other.
>
> The students are really open to each other. They respect each other. Some have goals, and that pulls the others along.
>
> The students are of such different backgrounds, but they're all kind to each other.

During their free time Parkland students frequently are observed to divide up into different lounge areas by ethnic group. ISC students, however, generally appeared to collaborate quite comfortably across lines of race, gender, and age. Still, ISC faculty members were attentive to the differential impact the community had on individual students or sub-groups of students:

> I'm seeing the community as an asset for a group of students I hadn't thought about—the rural kids that didn't follow the mainstream.
>
> I know the young women talked to each other outside of class, but I'm not sure about the guys. There were "sub-demographics" in the community, too; for example, three of the young women had babies.
>
> The black male students had attendance problems, and it affected their grades negatively. The white female students had attendance problems, but it didn't affect their grades as negatively.
>
> We have to get a person of color teaching in ISC II! Maybe there was some connection that wasn't made because of WHO was teaching.

Instruction/Management Issues

Investments of energy and time. As mentioned earlier, ISC instructors consistently reported feeling that they were expending tremendous amounts of energy teaching in the ISC. Great investments of time were required, they indicated, not only to work with students, but also to collaborate with their fellow instructors. They were concerned about any changes in course load assignments that would impede this collaboration, as expressed in the following information from teacher interviews:

> It took a lot of hours, especially the first month or so, but I like it enough that I want to do it. Decreasing the release time will encourage people to bail out. It takes a ton of time. If it means you have to teach another class, it won't be manageable.
>
> If the release time is reduced, the quality will go down. It will be less integrated, and more just "linked." Most of us are in there ten hours a week. You need to be ready to reengage at any point, reiterate a point, etc. You can't really get too involved in grading papers or other things.
>
> If time is reduced I'll do the third semester, but I'll never do it again. It's not that my heart's not in the right place, but it's already exhausting.
>
> We're asking them to keep the release time at three hours. If we find that we're not retaining more students after a year or two, then we should scrap it. If we're retaining more students, then it's paying for itself.
> I thought we'd spend more time integrating our curriculum. We needed more time in the summer. Much of it's day-by-day shifting.
>
> I'm better now at reflecting on how what I'm doing fits in with what the others are doing. It's not easier this time than last. Teachers are going to change, and then the integration changes.

Evaluator observations supported the teacher reports. Perhaps the clearest examples seen were from the Fall 1998 ISC II. The following notes were made while ISC II students were engaged in collaborative small-group work, integrating skills learned in their CCS class with their study of literature. The notes may serve to help explain the exhaustion level reported by their instructors at the end of the semester:

> There is lots of talking in this (small) group, primarily between two male students. They emphasize and re-emphasize the sexual content of the stories, loudly and rather childishly talking about "fornication": how it's spelled, what it means, etc. This group does work more as a group than the other groups. They start to remind each other of events in the plot to illustrate various points they are making (but it is not at all clear that they are talking about the assigned story). "Oh, I didn't read that story," says one. Eventually, one of the young women in the group tries to get the discussion more focused. (Wednesday, September 23, 1998)
>
> The CCS instructor reminds the groups that they are supposed to self-govern, and keep themselves on task. The energy in this room reminds me of my own experience 20 years ago teaching pre-school and kindergarten. All of the students do appear to be working on the assignment, but there is a lot of movement. The students joke good-naturedly with each other. There is a lot of talking, laughing, and calling out of answers and questions. There are multiple demands for teacher attention from different corners of the room. Students make jokes for the benefit of other students on the other side of the room. (Wednesday, October 28, 1998)

Both semesters of ISC III students were observed several times engaged in collaborative writing assignments and collaborative math work. Students were engaged, spontaneous, and humorous, but did not exhibit the kinetic, frenetic energy seen with the fall ISC II students. Neither did the smaller group of spring ISC II students exhibit the same sorts of peer interaction. Perhaps a point is being over-emphasized here, but the observation being made is that the instructors in the learning communities were challenged to maintain some classroom decorum while presenting challenging, intellectually energizing material to the students.

It should be noted, perhaps predictably, that the full-time faculty members teaching in the learning communities also are individuals highly involved with other responsibilities on the campus. Some of these instructors have other administrative responsibilities related to developmental education within their departments, chair or serve on multiple committees, hold leadership positions in the college Senate, and/or involve themselves in a variety of professional development activities for the rest of the faculty. While it is easy to understand that teaching in the ISC for a stretch of four or more hours at a time is exhausting, and that

the collaboration and team-teaching are time-consuming, these individuals are further tapped out as a result of their commitment to excellence in many other areas of the college, as well.

Staffing. "Flexibility" is the word used most frequently by ISC instructors describing the most important characteristic of a successful learning community instructor. While this trait was required of all faculty participants, as schedules changed to accommodate various lessons and interjections from co-teachers were common, the greatest curricular flexibility seemed to be required of the reading teachers. CCS instructors who brought in supplementary materials to enhance understanding of the content courses were valued by their team for their ability to integrate reading skills into the other subjects. CCS instructors who were more bound to their text were seen as less of a "fit" for the learning community approach. Opinions about team selection were strong:

> One thing we said was that we needed flexible teachers.
>
> I say, "Don't offer it," if we don't have the right teachers for it.
>
> People who can't deal with disruption should never teach in the ISC.

In the fall both teams of instructors seemed to feel that they were complementary instructors:

> We've set aside egos.
>
> I like the team teaching a lot. I feel really safe with the others.
>
> I think we mesh and complement each other well.

Interestingly, several of the instructors felt that the integration did not come as easily in the spring, even though one of the ISCs had the same four instructors teaching:

> As some teachers rotate out and others rotate in, the integration gets more difficult. A different instructor might bring a different style and different goals. It might be valuable for a TEAM to stay together for three semesters. Integration would improve. It was fine this semester, but we had some dissimilar pedagogical ideas.
>
> This semester I felt less free to flex the schedule. I like structure, but too much of it works against integration, I think.

> We need to integrate math into the schedule more. Math shouldn't always be for two hours after lunch.

Course content. There were philosophical differences among the faculty regarding the need to keep the content of the college-level courses in the ISCs (LIT 120, PSY 101, ORN 101) the same as the content in the regular curriculum. The LIT 120 and PSY 101 instructors generally preferred to keep them as similar as possible, presenting them with additional challenges:

> I've been trying hard to keep this class as similar to the regular one as I can, but the difference seems to be getting greater. We're maybe a week behind now. These are not going to be "A" students. I had a couple of "Bs" at midterm. There's a greater range in my regular class. In the ISC, usually the test grades are C and below.

> We're covering more in the LIT class this semester. We're reading a lot. I'm not sure if we're doing a good job connecting the material to their lives.

> Poetry was hard for them. Short stories and drama were fun for them. We didn't cover as much as the night class.

> My colleagues and I argue this point. I think we first must be concerned with how WELL we're preparing students. Others place primary importance on the exact content of a course. They say that one MUST cover these specific authors and these works. It's bogus. Teachers are so different already.

Selection of college-level courses for ISCs. ISC II faculty seemed comfortable with the inclusion of ORN 101 in their community. Some ISC III faculty, in fact, wished that more of their students had a working knowledge of the ORN 101 course material. Similarly, the ISC III faculty was supportive of the inclusion of PSY 101 in their curriculum. Any wringing of hands about course selection surfaced over the ISC II students' performance in the LIT 120 course. Certainly, the LIT 120 content challenged the students' analytical, critical thinking, and writing skills. Some faculty members and task force members, noting the students' generally stronger oral communication skills, recommended the substitution of an introductory speech class (SPE 101) for the fall of 1999. It was suggested that students

would experience more success in this course. Others grieved the loss of the engaging content of the literature class:

> Their animation and engagement were greatest during LIT.
>
> I think the LIT belongs in there (in the community). I strongly think they need the content of something like this. It helps their reading and critical thinking.
>
> I have mixed feelings. We could use LIT to support the overall theme of self-responsibility. How do we bring in the content piece with speech?

Faculty Survey

An anonymous survey questionnaire was given to the ISC faculty members at the end of each semester, as well as to faculty members teaching the same courses in the regular curriculum. Instructors were asked to compare their teaching experience during the current semester with previous teaching experiences at Parkland College. Responses to the 16 items were compared using independent t-tests. Significant differences ($p = .05$) were found on the following items, with ISC faculty members more likely to respond positively:

> I spent more time integrating my course's content with other disciplines.
>
> I spent more time thinking about other disciplines.
>
> I learned more from my colleagues.
>
> I'm feeling more important in the "big picture" at this college.
>
> My students did more collaborative work.

A significant difference ($p = .05$) was found on the following item, as well, with ISC instructors more likely to respond negatively: "The administration is exerting more and more authority over what I do." With the significance level raised to .10, those teaching in the ISC also were more likely to endorse the following statement: "I got to know some of my colleagues better."

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Overview

The intent of this study was to evaluate the development and implementation of interdisciplinary learning communities for community college students in developmental reading, writing, and mathematics courses. A variety of methods, both quantitative and qualitative, was used to address questions of student adjustment and academic progress, as well as to understand the experience of students and faculty in the learning community structure. The learning communities evaluated for this study had students enrolled in four team-taught, integrated courses, a model typically referred to as a "coordinated studies model."

Certain aspects of Parkland College's venture into learning communities set it apart from similar endeavors at other post-secondary institutions. The coordinated studies model could be considered the most labor-intensive learning community model for faculty, as it involves team teaching and necessitates extensive coordination and integration of the content of multiple courses. Parkland then piloted this model with students often considered to be the most difficult to engage, those entering college with seventh- to ninth-grade reading levels. Parkland called this community the "Integrated Studies Community II" (ISC II). When a second community (ISC III) was added, planners again adopted the coordinated studies model, but targeted students with tenth- to twelfth-grade reading levels. In a break from college policy, and from the conventional wisdom of some traditional developmental educators, one of the courses in each of the communities was a college-level, transferable course not available to students at these reading levels in the regular curriculum. The unique

qualities of Parkland's Integrated Studies Communities, in fact, led to an Illinois Community College Board award in November of 1999 for excellence in learner-centered instruction.

The inclusion of a comprehensive evaluation was another feature of this program that set it apart from many learning communities. A qualitative case study approach was used to capture the planning phase, and documented a 20-year history of faculty and administrators' thwarted attempts to implement more effective and creative programming for this population of students. During this program's implementation, quantitative and qualitative methods were linked to respond to questions relating to student academic and social adjustment. This study reports the use of these methods during multiple semesters, the pilot implementation (spring of 1998) and two subsequent semesters (fall of 1998 and spring of 1999).

Conclusions

Throughout the evaluation, students enrolled in the learning communities were compared with students in developmental courses in the regular curriculum, and learning community instructors were compared with those teaching the same courses in the regular curriculum. Learning community students tended to earn more credit hours than their comparison groups, to enroll in subsequent semesters at higher rates, and to attempt more credit hours during those subsequent semesters. Reading levels of the ISC II students, those with the lowest reading scores, improved dramatically compared with the lowest-scoring students in the regular developmental reading classes. ISC III students generally were found to advance to college-level writing classes at higher rates than similar students in the regular developmental writing classes. While ISC students did not complete the literature and psychology courses at the same rate as the college-level students taking these courses in the regular curriculum, they clearly became engaged with the content of the classes and

considered them their favorite courses. Class discussions frequently were rich, reflecting humor, good insight, and the ability to make connections to the real world. These ideas, however, rarely were expressed clearly in the ISC students' written assignments, in which students appeared to struggle with fundamental writing skills.

ISC students valued the learning community experience for the close relationships with teachers and classmates. Many found a new confidence in their ability to succeed in an educational setting. Interestingly, while most ISC students considered the learning community structure an excellent way to become acclimated to the college environment, they expressed an eagerness to be enrolled in the regular curriculum the following semester. Many, however, kept in touch with former ISC students and instructors in the regular curriculum, enrolling in classes together and dropping by instructors' offices to inform them of their progress.

Baker and Siryk's (1989) Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire was shortened somewhat, and many of the items were re-written, in an attempt to develop an instrument more suitable for assessing the adaptation of community college students at these reading levels to the college environment. An analysis of the principal components of the adapted version supported the four factors of Baker and Siryk's original version (Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Personal-Emotional Adjustment, and Goal Commitment/Institutional Attachment), and yielded an even shorter 22-item version with an eighth-grade reading level. Although the ISC students did not necessarily show statistically significant improvement in all four areas over the course of a semester, the trend was toward ISC II students consistently showing greater adjustment than their counterparts in the regular curriculum. Both ISC II and ISC III students scored higher than their comparison groups on the Goal Commitment/Institutional Attachment factor.

Some concerns surfaced in student interviews about the possibility of students in the ISCs feeling isolated from the main activities of campus. Indeed, a similar model was abandoned at William Rainey Harper College (Mott, Burns, Chapman, Phillips, & Staub, 1999) because of these very concerns. Matters were not quite so clear at Parkland, as some students indicated they easily could be distracted from class attendance and academic work if not enrolled in the more contained setting with the ISC cohort and team of teachers.

Instructors were energized by the interdisciplinary approach, discovering new connections between their discipline and those of their colleagues. They reported feeling safe and supported as they observed and tried new teaching techniques and ways of assessing student learning. The support of the team of teachers also was valuable to them as they attempted to address the complex needs of particular students.

Those teaching the college-level courses in the ISCs were challenged, however, as they attempted to keep the content of their "regular" and ISC classes similar. Issues of whether to cover material with breadth or depth appear common in classrooms invested in collaborative learning activities. Although the ISC faculty members (in particular, those that were full-time faculty members) frequently described themselves as "exhausted" while teaching in the intense learning community environment, they also regularly expressed interest in teaching in this setting again. They were convinced that many of the students that survived in the supportive learning community structure would not have been so fortunate in a regular, course-by-course curriculum.

Much has been written of learning communities' promise of faculty rejuvenation. Most learning communities, however, have not targeted students considered academically underprepared for college-level work. One notable exception is California State University, Los Angeles, one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse campuses in the United

States. Cal State L.A. (Martinez, 1999) reports many of the same student benefits, academic and social, seen at Parkland. They further describe learning community faculty members who feel connected across disciplines, who collaborate and depend on student services personnel, and who have developed deep understandings of the issues facing students from various marginalized groups. These benefits, according to Martinez, are the result of careful faculty selection and the provision of considerable training and incentives.

Evaluation Utility and Feasibility

This study described an evaluation approach that could be used for similar curricular innovations. Educational programs in general, and learning communities specifically, are complex entities, and evaluations of these programs typically must answer to a number of constituent groups. This particular evaluation admittedly involved a fairly labor-intensive process. It is the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, however, that was compelling and useful for the clients at Parkland College.

The historical material captured in the case study of the task force, for example, proved to be much more important than anticipated in gathering and sustaining support from the administrative and academic units on campus. The demonstrated sensitivity to the institution's contextual complexity enhanced the credibility of the evaluative work that followed. The case study honored the work of earlier program developers, but also allowed current stakeholders to consider possible pitfalls to successful implementation.

The various pre and post measures, interviews, and observations used during implementation proved serviceable in addressing the evaluation questions. It appears that they could be useful to other evaluators, both internal and external, of learning communities. Certain types of data collected in a study of this sort probably are more accessible to internal

evaluators. In this particular study, for example, the evaluator's familiarity with the college's student information system allowed more immediate access to various types of student data, such as grades, credit hours earned, and demographics. Similarly, the evaluator's frequent informal communication with ISC planners and faculty yielded rich information above and beyond the formal data collection plan.

The decision to use a mixed-methods approach was, of course, made for reasons beyond those strictly tied to utility. The evaluator believed that one way of controlling for bias was to include multiple perspectives, and considered narrative as offering a strong representation of those perspectives. Additionally, the numerous qualitative methods were seen as adding depth to the understanding of the quantitative measures. It is perhaps obvious that evaluators choose methods according to personal preference and to their own learning history, adding methods as the value of those methods becomes understood.

A learning community evaluation is likely to address a number of complex questions, and the mixed-method approach used in this study appears useful in addressing such questions. Feasibility could be enhanced, perhaps, by using more than one evaluator, as the approach necessitates a significant investment of time. Including the perspectives of multiple evaluators also can help establish the validity of findings.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are related to the realities of applied research settings. No random assignment to treatment conditions was possible. Students themselves selected whether to be part-time or full-time students, to attend days or evenings, and to enroll in a learning community or not. Because of this, learning community students tended to be slightly younger than their comparison groups; learning communities also enrolled a higher

proportion of African-American students. ISC II students tended to have slightly lower reading assessments than their comparison group in the regular curriculum.

The sizes of the groups were not consistent from semester to semester. Rooms and schedules were altered somewhat from fall to spring. A different level of mathematics was taught in the spring than was taught in the fall, and changes were made in some faculty teams. These sorts of alterations forced an ongoing consideration of when data should be examined by semester, and when they should be aggregated across the academic year.

The changes in the faculty teams pointed out the significance of "chemistry" in the success of a community of learners. While this evaluation did not attempt to collect the extensive data needed to examine in great depth the interpersonal dynamics among colleagues, it was clear that some teams of teachers found their differing styles and philosophies more energizing and complementary than others.

The usual concerns about interpreting the work of an internal evaluator should be considered with this study. It is clear that an evaluator who also is an employee of the college has access to a great deal of data, and knows more about the program and the context than anyone from the outside. It is not so clear if the internal evaluator has overlooked critical information that might have been noticed by an outsider. It is hoped that the numerous sources and sorts of data collected, the many eyes that have reviewed the findings, and the expertise of the metaevaluators can help minimize concerns about objectivity in the study.

Implications for Further Research

Sustainability

The National Learning Communities Dissemination Project is administered through

the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education at The Evergreen State College. From 1996 to 1999, 21 post-secondary institutions received funding support from the U. S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE) Comprehensive Program in order to support learning community initiatives. According to the Washington Center's Associate Director, Emily Decker (personal communication, November 19, 1999), these programs have been difficult to sustain, with "about one-third making good progress, one-third staying about the same, and one-third dissipating." Two of the 21 schools, in fact, withdrew from the project after the first year. Geri et al. (1999), after analyzing case study narratives from the 19 participating institutions, have identified the following elements as "vital" to sustaining learning community projects:

1. Institutional readiness, indicated by a group of faculty and leaders committed to the project, and prepared to work collaboratively and share responsibility; institutional views of general education open to learning community approaches; and institutional attention to curricular initiatives;

2. Funding and other resources, especially those directed toward faculty curriculum planning and faculty development, including summer planning stipends, external consultants, retreats, and conferences; and with a plan to transition from start-up monies to permanent funding levels;

3. Faculty involvement and faculty support, beyond the "one-workshop-at-a-time" model, understanding that the reflective community of collaborative practitioners required for learning community success goes against traditional practices in higher education, and necessitates time for ongoing, frequent communication;

4. Collaborative leadership group, across disciplinary and administrative lines; requiring creative thinking, shared vision, and sometimes significant personal change; and with a willingness to allow others in to assume leadership and advocacy roles;

5. Assessment for program development, to be included throughout design, implementation, and ongoing development; using quantitative and qualitative evaluative measures to address issues significant to the institution; to develop ways to listen to student input at every step; and to strengthen practice;

6. Commitment for the long haul, understanding that the development phase should be seen as a five- to seven-year process, and only the "first step in the slow process of remaking both conversations and actual efforts about the way teaching and learning occur."

While these six elements were not always evident in earlier attempts to develop programming for students in developmental courses at Parkland College, they clearly were present in the Integrated Studies Community project. From the beginning a task force was appointed that included faculty from academic and student service areas. It did not include department chairs, freeing developers immediately to think beyond ingrained assumptions about divisions, hierarchies, and budgets. Administrative support was strong. Resources were allocated to get the ball rolling. Program evaluation was valued.

The thoughtful counsel from the Washington Center, however, emphasizes the importance of faculty developing and sustaining their own community before being able to develop one among students. Parkland's ISC instructors have found that this takes a substantial and ongoing investment of time. It appears that Geri, Kuehn, and MacGregor (1999) would concur. Parkland's ability to sustain the Integrated Studies Communities over the long haul appears to depend considerably upon the institution's investment in the faculty development and support aspects of the program. Future research on the sustainability of this

program, and of other initiatives, could be organized around the six elements identified by Geri et al. (1999).

Issues of Race

Earlier in this research, Coelho's (1994) study of collaborative and cooperative learning was discussed, supporting the use of these methods for all students, but specifically indicating that this sort of learning environment is considered more stimulating by African-American students. In fact, both black and white students enrolled in the Integrated Studies Communities tended to complete more credit hours than students enrolled in developmental courses in the regular curriculum. Whether enrolled in a learning community or the regular curriculum, however, black students still earned fewer credit hours, on average, than their white classmates. This was true even when variables of age, sex, and reading level were taken into account. One challenge, then, in future program planning and evaluation, is to explore other variables that might explain this difference.

One issue bearing consideration is the high enrollment of African-American students in the Integrated Studies Communities, but the apparent unavailability of teachers of color for these communities. Delpit (1995) has written of the challenges in education with the steadily growing numbers of students from various minority groups, but the minimal representation from these groups in teacher education programs. Delpit compels the reader to consider the significant cultural influences on oral interactions, and the folly of attempting to develop progressive educational programs with minimal involvement of minority colleagues. She suggests that students must be told explicitly the "codes or rules of power" (p. 25) embedded in school culture so that they can acquire that power for themselves, a task perhaps better understood by teachers from outside the "culture of power." Delpit (1995)

further cautions teachers, both black and white, against making assumptions about their students that focus on deficits rather than strengths. She argues against skills-based approaches that isolate skills from meaningful contexts ("teaching less when, in actuality, these students need *more* of what school has to offer," p. 173), an opinion clearly agreeing with the philosophy of the Integrated Studies Communities.

Feagin and Sikes (1994) further describe the challenges in higher education, even for the middle-class African-American student. Again, the unexamined assumptions of white educators, and the exclusion of minority perspectives in admissions screenings, courses, curricula, and research, all can lead to a less than welcoming environment for students outside the majority group. These authors, along with Delpit (1995), describe prominent black professionals who attribute much of their personal success to the mentoring and high expectations of the African-American educators from their youth and college years.

It is fair to say that the instructors in Parkland's Integrated Studies Communities are familiar with the difficult personal work described by Howard (1999) of understanding their own racial identities. Concepts of white privilege, racial dominance, and the invisible benefits of institutional and societal racism are not unknown to these individuals, and issues of class, race, and gender are frequent topics in the learning communities' classroom discussions. Certainly, feelings expressed about these teachers--of admiration, gratitude, frustration, and fury--came from black and white students alike. Still, one has to question what the effects would be on students if they had the opportunity, every day in class, to see teachers from majority and minority groups integrating their disciplines, and working and learning together. Future research on learning communities should consider these questions.

Service Learning

As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, Gabelnick (1997) advocates the inclusion of service learning components in learning communities and other college curricula. The stated purpose is to promote ideals of social justice, community responsibility, and respect for difference. Emily Decker, from the Washington Center at Evergreen State College (personal communication, November 19, 1999), offers the opinion that,

> People who are passionate about issues of access, equity, and diversity need to be a part of the learning community movement on campus--and people passionate about learning communities need to be involved in issues of access, equity, and diversity.

While ISC instructors reported difficulties getting students to attend activities outside of class time, the infusion of a service learning component into the ISCs may offer promise to the learning community approach to developing an engaged and active citizenry. Many students enrolled in the ISCs have seen themselves as recipients of services, and somewhat powerless in society. They have not, for the most part, developed self-concepts with an understanding of the tremendous contributions they can make. Service learning offers an intriguing component to research in the study of student adjustment. Andrew Taylor (evaltalk, listserv of the American Evaluation Association, December 24, 1999), a researcher at the Centre for Research and Education in Human Services in Ontario, Canada, offers these relevant and timely comments in considering the complex roles of program evaluators:[5] "We have to find practical ways to enact a vision of healthy and progressive community life. We have to express this vision in our projects, and deal with the social implications of our attempts." The inclusion of service learning within a learning community model is one

[5] It should be noted that Taylor was writing neither about learning communities nor service learning specifically.

practical way to express the vision of an active citizenry, but a study is needed to explore the "social implications" of the attempt.

Mixed-Method Research

This study adds to a body of work, mainly attached to the Washington Center, supporting the value of a mixed-method approach to the evaluation of learning communities. The combination of methods provides focus in guiding the various stages of program development and implementation. Curricular innovations also tend to attract a wide variety of stakeholders, and the provision of compelling quantitative and qualitative information can address the questions considered most important by a number of constituent groups.

Questions about students' personal development and well-being, however, typically have been addressed by qualitative methods. These methods have proven invaluable in understanding the learning community experience. The evaluation of the ISCs, however, also attempted to quantify student adjustment by revising Baker and Siryk's (1989) Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire.

The revision, a brief, 22-item instrument with an eighth-grade reading level, remains to be tested for its usefulness in addressing questions of student academic adjustment, social adjustment, social-emotional adjustment, and goal commitment/institutional attachment. As norms are developed, the instrument may hold promise in the evaluation of educational programs purporting to facilitate the adjustment of college students, especially when those students may lack college-level skills in reading. It was designed for native speakers of English, but may prove to have additional uses for international students with limited English proficiency.

Both groups of ISC students, ISC II and ISC III, showed stronger Goal Commitment/Institutional Attachment scores on the revised SACQ than did their comparison groups, supported by the ISC students' higher re-enrollment rates from semester to semester. When the principal components of the revised instrument were analyzed, however, the new Attachment factor of the 22-item short form included four items that previously had been assigned to the Academic Adjustment factor. Consequently, future research using the short form might show a considerable shift in the Attachment factor.

It is difficult to imagine a learning community evaluation that could adequately address the concerns of its many stakeholders--students, faculty, administrators, taxpayers, boards--without employing a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. During a community's fragile, formative years, it seems especially important to have the support of these many constituencies. Perhaps all learning community evaluations should rely on the benefits of a mixed-method approach; this certainly appears likely for evaluations conducted during a program's formative years.

Longitudinal Research

Finally, we are reminded in this evaluation of the importance of longitudinal research. The earlier pilot study spotlighted the need for refinements of the original research design. During the full implementation, the fall semester was unlike the following spring. There were faculty changes, course changes, and room and schedule changes. For whatever reason, students that began in the spring were different from those starting in the fall, in terms of attendance, classroom participation, and course completion. A snapshot of any one semester would not allow a deep understanding.

Geri et al. (1999) consider any institution's first learning community implementation to be a "major innovation" (p. 196). Learning communities are not simple tweakings of existing programs, but instead require the re-working of relationships, curriculum, and pedagogy. They require significant resources in terms of money, time, energy, and administrative finesse. Learning community pioneers describe feeling unsettled during the first five to seven years of a program's existence.

Parkland College now is in that unsettled period. The developers of the Integrated Studies Communities began by diving into the deep end of the pool, designing a program for students who historically have been least likely to persist toward their academic goals, challenging restrictions usually placed on these students, and adopting an intensive, team-taught model. The mixed methods used across multiple semesters certainly show mixed results. There are indications, however, that the Integrated Studies Communities are helping students in developmental courses progress toward their goals, by facilitating the connections students make with course content, classmates, instructors, the college, and the community.

Evaluation will continue to guide decisions made as this program evolves. In many ways the jury still is out, but to borrow words from Geri et al. (1999), the Integrated Studies Communities "certainly are reforming relationships and curricular intentions and stimulating important conversations" (p. 203). Longitudinal follow-ups of learning community participants and continued evaluation are recommended to see where these reforms and conversations lead.

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APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Bureau of Educational Research
College of Education
236 Education Building
1310 South Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

August 19, 1998

Ms. Linda Hamman Moore
Department of Educational Psychology
210 Education
MC-708

Dear Ms. Moore,

On behalf of the College of Education Human Subjects Review Committee, I have reviewed your research project entitled "The Integrated Studies Communities at Parkland College, 1998-1999." I find that this project meets the exemption criteria for federal regulation 46.101(b)2 for research involving the use of observational, survey, and interview procedures where the information obtained will be kept confidential.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Sonda Gabriel, Ph.D.
Coordinator, College of Education Human Subjects Review Committee

c: Lizanne DeStefano

Phone (217) 333-3023 • Fax (217) 244-0538

ATTACHMENT 33

College of Education Student Coursework Research Project Form for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

1) Complete this form neatly (type, if possible) and attach all required documents (e.g., consent letters, copies of questionnaires)
2) If you have any questions as you are working on the form, please contact Sonda Gabriel, Staff, College of Education Human Subjects Committee, 236C Education, tel: 244-0515, e-mail: sgabriel@uiuc.edu
3) Return the completed form to Room 236C Education, Bureau of Educational Research, for human subjects review
4) Research projects may not begin until human subjects approval has been obtained

Student name: Linda Hamman Moore

Mailing address and telephone: 2602 Coppertree Road, Champaign IL 61822

(217) 356-0484 (home); (217) 351-2219 or 2429 (work)

E-mail address: ld-moore@uiuc.edu

Course name and number: EDPSY 499

Instructor's name: Lizanne DeStefano

Project title: The Integrated Studies Communities at Parkland College, 1998-99

Type of participant:

X Adult non-student

_____ UIUC student

X Other (specify) Parkland College students

Duration of project: from 8/98 to 5/99

Project location: Parkland College, Champaign IL

Objectives and significance of the proposed research:

This is a continuation of a pilot project investigated during the Spring, 1998 semester. The Human Subjects Review approval regarding that research is attached. While the evaluation of the pilot project indicated that the learning community curricular structures may hold promise for underprepared college students, the pilot included only small numbers of students and faculty. During the fall and spring semesters (1998-99), two learning communities with greater enrollment will run concurrently. An evaluation design using both quantitative and qualitative research methods will again be followed.

Procedures: Describe how the participants will be involved in this research. Please be specific and provide a complete description of what the participants in the research will be asked to do. This should include a description of the specific research topic, the method(s) of data collection to be used (questionnaire, interview, observation), the length of time and number of sessions involved for each subject (e.g., one 30 minute session), a description of any compensation or benefits the participants will receive and any risks that may be involved for participants.

Students in the learning communities, and students with similar reading assessments in the regular curriculum, will take an adapted version of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire as a pre and post measure. Pre and post measures of reading comprehension and writing ability will be collected routinely at Parkland College, regardless of the status of this study. A common exit experience (a comparison of written literary analyses) will occur for the learning community students and students enrolled in LIT 120 (Introduction to Literature) in the regular curriculum. Enrollment status of the students will be collected on a longitudinal basis. The SACQ adaptation can be completed in about 15 minutes.

The learning communities each will be observed for 3-4 1-hour sessions. The participating faculty members will be asked to participate in one 30-minute interview at midterm. A sample of the student participants will be asked to participate in individual interviews or focus groups. Faculty and student surveys will be administered at the end of each semester; these will be given to learning community participants, to students with similar reading assessments in the regular curriculum, and to faculty teaching the same courses in the regular curriculum.

Students will be offered the opportunity to receive an interpretation of their test results. No risks outside of the normal risks of attending college are foreseen.

Describe the methods you will use for a) selecting research participants and b) ensuring that their participation is voluntary

Students showing reading and writing levels below the college level will be offered the opportunity to enroll in one of two learning communities (one community for students in CCS 098 and ENG 098 or 099; one community for students in CCS 099, ENG 099, and MAT 094). Their experience will be compared with that of students with similar assessment scores in the regular curriculum. While the pilot project attempted to compare learning community students with a matched sample, this approach will not be used during the 1998-99 academic year. The underprepared college population has a high mortality rate; thus, the matched sample design proved impractical.

A sample of students enrolled in LIT 120 in the regular curriculum will complete a common exit experience with the learning community students. Surveyed faculty will include the 8 instructors teaching in the two learning communities and also all others teaching the same courses in the regular curriculum.

All students and faculty will be advised that their participation is voluntary, confidential, and anonymous, in accordance with Human Subjects Review requirements at U of I, and with Parkland College policy.

What procedures will be used to ensure that the information obtained will be anonymous and/or confidential?

Only the evaluator will have the students' individual test scores on the SACQ; these results will be shared only with the individual student. No names will be used in reporting quantitative or qualitative data for either the student or faculty groups. Faculty teaching in the learning communities are, of course, known to the college, but quotes will not be attributed to them without their consent.

IMPORTANT-copies of the consent form or a written description of the procedures for briefing subjects and any questionnaires to be used in this research MUST be attached to this form.

08-16-98

Signature of Researcher Date

Human Subjects Approval Date

Fall, 1998

Dear Parkland College Student or Faculty Member:

You are being asked to participate in a research project designed to compare the experiences of students and faculty teaching and learning in the Integrated Studies Community with students and faculty in the regular curriculum. Your participation will help us answer questions about how to design curricula that benefit students most. Participating students will be asked to complete two questionnaires during class at the beginning and end of the semester. Some students might be asked to participate in a brief interview around midterm. Participating faculty members will be asked to complete a brief anonymous survey questionnaire at the end of the semester; some might be asked to participate in a brief interview. The Integrated Studies Community classroom will be observed on three or four occasions.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to refuse participation, or discontinue participation at any point during the study, without penalty. No particular risks or discomforts are anticipated. Students will not be identified by name in the final report. Students will have the opportunity to meet with the evaluator for an interpretation of their questionnaire results, but no one else, outside of the evaluator, will have access to individual student or faculty responses.

Please keep this letter as a reminder of your informed consent. Please call either one of us if you have questions about this project.

Linda Hamman Moore, Counselor
Parkland College
(217) 351-2219 or 351-2429

Lizanne DeStefano, Ph.D.
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Illinois
(217) 333-8520 or 244-4613

3.39 RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research projects to be conducted on campus using Parkland students or staff in testing, questionnaires, or interviews are to be coordinated through the Office of the Director of Research and Evaluation. Frequently, resource assistance or consultation on design or procedure can be provided to enhance such efforts. Coordination of research further protects staff and students from too frequent demands and from misinterpretation or misuse of College data.

3.39.01 EXTERNAL RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research projects to be conducted by non-Parkland entities on the Parkland campus using Parkland students or staff in testing, questionnaires, systematic interviews, or which make use of the college database are to be coordinated by the Director of Research and Evaluation. Frequently, resource assistance or consultation on design or procedure can be provided to enhance such efforts. Coordination of research protects staff and students from excessive demands and misappropriation of college data.

3.39.02 INTERNAL SCHOLARLY/ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Internal scholarly or academic research conducted by Parkland faculty/staff on the Parkland campus using Parkland students or staff in testing, questionnaires, or systematic interviews is an academic matter and therefore must be coordinated by the chair of the department in which that research is to be conducted. A notice of intent to conduct research shall be sent to the Vice President for Academic and Student Services in such a timely manner as to permit discussion and resolution of any potential difficulties.

3.39.03 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL) RESEARCH

All research projects must comply with applicable government regulations regarding research on human subjects and must recognize the civil rights embodied in the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Civil Rights Act.

Adopted: September 19, 1984
Revised: February 16, 1994

Procedure

3.39.01 PROCEDURES FOR EXTERNAL INITIATED RESEARCH PROPOSALS

1. Request forms for approval to conduct research will be provided by the Office of Institutional Research.

2. All proposals and other supporting documentation must be submitted to the Office of Institutional Research will be forward then to appropriate department(s) for review and recommendation.

3. All materials will be forwarded to members of the Research Advisory Committee and schedule a date for review by the Committee.

4. All appropriately documented requests will receive prompt review and a written response. The length of time required for response will vary depending on the nature of the proposal, and access to any approving committees and personnel.

5. All findings will be shared with the College and filed with the Office of Institutional Research upon completion of the project.

6. Participation by students and/or staff in any research project is voluntary, and subjects of research may withdraw from participation at any time. Subjects are to be notified in writing and orally of this right.

7. Any disputes regarding these procedures or related policy will be resolved using standard institutional mechanisms.

8. Except where agreed otherwise, the expense of the research shall be born by the researcher.

9. Guidelines to be used for review of external research proposals are:

   a. The respect and integrity of students and staff must be preserved at every level of the research process.

   b. Research must demonstrate its value not only to the professional literature and community but also to the interest of Parkland College.

   c. Topics for study must be related to the educational process or experience and an area of concern for Parkland College.

   d. All research projects must have a clearly defined statement of the problem and methodology.

   e. Surveys and other instruments administered in the class setting must also be approved by the department chair and instructor.

   f. All proposals to conduct research must demonstrate that no unauthorized costs will be incurred to the College.

3.39.04 PROCEDURES FOR INTERNAL RESEARCH REQUIRING INSTITUTIONAL ASSISTANCE

1. Request forms will be provided by the Office of Institutional Research upon request.

2. All requests will be pre-approved by either the President or Vice President(s) and submitted to the Office of Institutional Research.

3. Requests involving data retrieval from any institutional data base will be preceded by a direct request for a data file from Administrative Computing Services.

4. The initiator of a request will ensure that accurate data files are provided to the Office of Institutional Research.

5. Unless the Office of Institutional Research has a budget to meet internal requests, all costs, e.g., scantron forms and duplication, will be charged back to requesting department/researcher.

APPENDIX B

STUDENT SURVEY

STUDENT SURVEY

As you read the following statements, please compare your experience at Parkland this semester with other school experiences you have had (in high school, at Parkland, or at another college).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
These classes made more sense.	1	2	3	4
I participated more during class discussions.	1	2	3	4
I was more determined to succeed.	1	2	3	4
I didn't fit in as well.	4	3	2	1
I got to know my classmates better.	1	2	3	4
I did more homework.	1	2	3	4
I was more likely to help my classmates with their school work.	1	2	3	4
These teachers were better.	1	2	3	4
These teachers were nicer to students.	1	2	3	4
These classes were less interesting.	4	3	2	1
These classmates were nicer.	1	2	3	4
People didn't get along as well.	4	3	2	1
I did not attend class as often.	4	3	2	1
I learned more useful information.	1	2	3	4
I expected more of myself.	1	2	3	4
People of different backgrounds and races got along better.	1	2	3	4
I was more likely to study with a classmate.	1	2	3	4
I earned poorer grades.	4	3	2	1
These classes had more complicated subject matter.	1	2	3	4
These classes were a lot of work.	1	2	3	4
Classmates were more likely to help me with school work.	1	2	3	4

These questions are only for students who were enrolled in the Integrated Studies Community this semester:

I would like to be in an Integrated Studies Community for another semester.	1	2	3	4

Why or why not?

What would you change about the ISC?

What worked best for you in the ISC?

APPENDIX C

FACULTY SURVEY

FACULTY SURVEY

As you read the following statements, please compare your teaching experience this semester with other semesters you have taught at Parkland.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I spent more time integrating my course's content with other disciplines.	1	2	3	4
I was less likely to try new teaching methods.	4	3	2	1
I spent more time thinking about other disciplines.	1	2	3	4
I learned more from my colleagues.	1	2	3	4
I learned more about myself.	1	2	3	4
I got to know some of my colleagues better.	1	2	3	4
I'm feeling more energetic.	1	2	3	4
I'm feeling less optimistic about my students.	4	3	2	1
I got to know my students better.	1	2	3	4
I'm feeling more isolated from my colleagues.	4	3	2	1
I'm feeling more important in the "big picture" at this college.	1	2	3	4
The administration is exerting more and more authority over what I do.	4	3	2	1
My students really "connected" with the course material.	1	2	3	4
I was more challenged intellectually.	1	2	3	4
I feel more like I fit in at this college.	1	2	3	4
My students did more collaborative work.	1	2	3	4

These questions are only for faculty members who taught in the Integrated Studies Community this semester:

I would like to teach in an Integrated Studies Community for another semester.	1	2	3	4

Why or why not?

What would you change about the ISC?

What worked best for you in the ISC?

APPENDIX D

PROMPTS FOR LITERARY ANALYSIS

LITERARY ANALYSIS

You will have one half hour to read and analyze the short story, *Girl*, by Jamaica Kincaid (pages 399-400 in the *Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature).* After reading the story a couple of times, write an analysis—this may include discussing the tone, characters, theme, and/or any other aspect of the story that you feel is significant.

(The prompt was the same both times, the only difference being that the other story used was *Barbie-Q* by Sandra Cisneros on pages 434-435.)

INTEGRATED STUDIES COMMUNITY
SPRING 1998 LITERATURE & ENGLISH FINAL

Please select 2 of the following 4 essay topics. Spend one half hour on each essay (in other words, this final will take one hour total: two essays of one half hour apiece). I have included quotes from the various characters in order to help stimulate your memory about the characters; but you do not have to stick simply to the quotes given. You will be graded according to the quality of your writing, the clarity of your ideas, and the level of understanding that you display about the characters and the pieces of literature that you discuss.

I.

"If He [Jesus] did what He said, then it's nothing for you to do but thow away everything and follow him, and if He didn't, then it's nothing for you to do but enjoy the few minutes you got left the best way you can--by killing somebody or burning down his house or doing some other meanness. No pleasure but meanness..."
(The Misfit, in *A Good Man's Hard to Find*)

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;
For I mine own gained knowledge should profane
If I would time expend with such snipe
But for my sport and profit . . . .
...Let me see now:
...to plume up my will
In double knavery. . . .
...Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.
(Iago, in *Othello*)

Think about how the Misfit relates to the grandmother in *A Good Man's Hard to Find*; and think about how Iago contrasts to his victims. What do you think these evil characters symbolize in the pieces they are in? Do they seem to symbolize similar things? Different things? Do they prey upon the same types of victims? If not, what's the difference in terms of who they prey upon or the role they play?

II.

"Walter, that ain't none of our money."
(Ruth Younger)
"No, Mama, something is happening between Walter and me. I don't know what it is--but he needs something--something I can't give him any more. He needs this chance, Lena."
(Ruth Younger)

"But now his old friends, the old buyers that loved him so, and always found some order to hand him in a pinch--they're all dead, retired. He used to be be able to make six, seven calls a day in Boston. Now he takes his valises out of the car and puts them back and takes them out again and he's exhausted."
(Linda Loman)

Walter Lee Younger says, "A man needs for a woman to back him up..." Compare and/or contrast Ruth Younger and Linda Loman, particularly in relation to how they deal with their

husbands, Walter and Willie. Do you think one of them has a healthier approach toward dealing with her husband? Which one, and why?

III.

Lines spoken by Willie Loman:
"I get so lonely."

"Figure it out. Work a lifetime to pay off a house. You finally own it, and there's nobody to live in it."

My brother Ben "knew what he wanted and went out and got it! Walked into a jungle, and comes out, the age of twenty-one and he's rich!"

Lines spoken by Walter Lee Younger:
"I'm a volcano...I am a giant--surrounded by ants! Ants who can't even understand what it is the giant is talking about."

"The future...a big, looming blank space--full of *nothing*."

"I'm thirty-five years old; I been married eleven years and I got a boy who sleeps in the living room--and all I got to give him is stories about how rich white people live..."

Compare and/or contrast Willie, of *Death of a Salesman*, and Walter, of *A Raisin in the Sun*.

IV.

"I don't flit! I--I experiment with different forms of expression--"
(Beneatha)
"...what one person could do for another, fix him up--sew up the problem, make him all right again. That was the most marvelous thing in the world...I wanted to do that...Fix up the sick...and make them whole again." (Beneatha)
"What have you done to your head--I mean your hair!"
(George, Beneatha's friend)

"Miss Moore was her name...she was always planning these boring-ass things for us to do..."
(Sylvia, from *The Lesson*)

"'You sound angry, Sylvia. Are you mad about something?' Givin me one of them grins...And she's lookin very closely at me like maybe she planning to do my portrait from memory."
(Sylvia and Miss Moore)
She has "nappy hair and proper speech and no makeup."
(Sylvia)

Compare and/or contrast Beneatha and Miss Moore. In what ways are they similar? Which of the two seems to know herself better? Explain.

APPENDIX E

FALL 1998 EVALUATION PLAN

F98 ISC EVALUATION PLAN

	Aug-98	Sep-98	Oct-98	Nov-98	Dec-98	Jan-99	Feb-99	Mar-99
Confirm evaluation questions	X							
Complete SACQ adaptation	X							
Students take ENG and RDG pretests	4/98-8/98							
Secure informed consent	X	X						
Student SSNs to OIRE for tracking		X						
Approach instructors of CCS 098/099	X							
Administer SACQ pretest	Wk of 8/31	Wk of 9/7						
SACQ scoring		X						
Classroom observations		1-Wk of 9/28?	1-Wk of 10/26?	1-Wk of 11/28?				
Observations of special activities	AS SCHEDULED							
Student interviews			Wks of 10/12 & 10/19					
Faculty interviews			Wks of 10/12 & 10/19					
LIT 120 comparisons					X			
Administer SACQ posttests					Wk of 12/7			
Students take ENG and RDG posttests					X			
Student survey questionnaires					Wk of 12/7			
Faculty survey questionnaires					Wk of 12/7			
Data analysis			X			X	X	
Preparation of draft report							X	
Collect SIS enrollment data						X		
Preparation of final report							X	X
Collect attendance data (THROUGHOUT!)								

APPENDIX F

FIFTY-SIX ITEM ADAPTATION OF STUDENT ADAPTATION TO COLLEGE QUESTIONNAIRE

56-item Adaptation of the SACQ
Corresponding items to the "logical analysis" of the original instrument

Factor 1: Academic Adjustment

Item addresses:	Item numbers
Motivation	5, 20, 41, 47
Application	3, 16, 24, 35
Performance	6, 9, 12, 18, 22, 32
Academic Environment	29, 44, 51, 55

Factor 2: Social Adjustment

General	1, 8, 17, 30, 37, 54
Other People	4, 13, 27, 34, 39, 46, 52
Nostalgia	19, 42
Social Environment	15, 25

Factor 3: Personal-Emotional Adjustment

Psychological	2, 7, 11, 26, 31, 36, 40, 53
Physical	10, 21, 23, 28, 33, 45

Factor 4: Attachment

General	14, 49, 50
This College	15, 38, 48

Total Score Only

Not within any of the 4 factors	43, 56

Adapted version of

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (Baker & Siryk, 1989)

NAME:_____

ID #:_____ TODAY'S DATE:_____

SEX: ❑ Male ❑ Female DATE OF BIRTH:_____

ETHNIC BACKGROUND: (optional)
❑ Asian or Pacific Islander ❑ American Indian or Alaskan Native
❑ Black, Non-Hispanic ❑ Hispanic
❑ White, Non-Hispanic ❑ Nonresident Alien

Have you attended college prior to this semester? ❑ Yes ❑ No
If "Yes," did you attend Parkland College? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Directions

For each of the following statements, circle the asterisk that best represents how closely the statement applies to you. Circle only one asterisk for each statement. To change an answer, draw an X through the incorrect response and circle the desired response.

	Not True at All for Me			Very True for Me
1. I fit in well at college.	*	*	*	*
2. I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.	*	*	*	*
3. I am keeping up with my school work.	*	*	*	*
4. I am meeting as many people and making as many friends as I want at college.	*	*	*	*
5. I know why I'm in college and what I want out of it.	*	*	*	*
6. I am finding the school work difficult in college.	*	*	*	*
7. I have been feeling sad and moody a lot.	*	*	*	*
8. I am adjusting well to college.	*	*	*	*
9. I have been having trouble taking tests.	*	*	*	*
10. I have been feeling tired a lot.	*	*	*	*
11. Being responsible for myself is difficult.	*	*	*	*
12. I am satisfied with how I'm doing on my school work.	*	*	*	*
13. I am getting to know some of my teachers personally.	*	*	*	*
14. I am glad I decided to go to college.	*	*	*	*
15. I am glad I decided to attend this particular college.	*	*	*	*
16. I'm not working as hard as I should on my school work.	*	*	*	*
17. There are several people I'm close to on this campus.	*	*	*	*
18. I'm not smart enough to do the school work I have this semester.	*	*	*	*
19. I have been feeling homesick.	*	*	*	*
20. Getting a college degree is very important to me.	*	*	*	*
21. My appetite is good.	*	*	*	*
22. I haven't been using my study time very well.	*	*	*	*
23. I have been having a lot of headaches.	*	*	*	*
24. Usually, I don't feel like studying.	*	*	*	*
25. There are plenty of interesting activities for students on this campus.	*	*	*	*
26. I've been thinking I should ask for help from a counselor on campus or out in the community.	*	*	*	*
27. I am getting along very well with my roommate.	*	*	*	*
28. I've gained (or lost) too much weight recently.	*	*	*	*
29. I am happy with the choice of classes at this college.	*	*	*	*
30. I know how you have to act to get along in college.	*	*	*	*
31. I have been getting angry too easily.	*	*	*	*
32. I have had trouble concentrating when I study.	*	*	*	*
33. I haven't been sleeping very well.	*	*	*	*

MORE ON REVERSE SIDE

	Not True at All for Me				Very True for Me
34. I am feeling uncomfortable around the people at college.					
35. I am attending classes regularly.					
36. Sometimes my thinking gets confused too easily.					
37. I am participating in enough social activities at college.					
38. I plan to stay at this college until I earn a degree or certificate.					
39. I haven't been mixing much with people I could date.					
40. I worry a lot about my bills.					
41. I am enjoying my school work.					
42. I have been feeling very lonely at college.					
43. I am in control of my life situation.					
44. I am satisfied with my classes this semester.					
45. I have been feeling healthy.					
46. I am very different from other students at this college in ways I don't like.					
47. My classes are not related to things I'm interested in.					
48. I've been thinking a lot about going to a different college.					
49. I've been thinking a lot about dropping out of college for good.					
50. I've been thinking a lot about dropping out of college for now and going back later.					
51. I am very satisfied with my teachers this semester.					
52. I can talk with some people at college about any problems I have.					
53. I am having trouble dealing with the stress caused by being in college.					
54. I'm happy with my social life at college.					
55. Overall, I'm happy with my academic situation at college.					
56. I think I'll be successful dealing with the challenges at college.					

APPENDIX G

TWENTY-TWO ITEM SHORT FORM OF SACQ ADAPTATION

Short Form of
Adapted Version of
Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (Baker & Siryk, 1989)

New Personal-Emotional Adjustment Items

I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.
I have been feeling sad and moody a lot.
I have been having a lot of headaches.
I have been getting angry too easily.
I have been feeling very lonely at college.
I am having trouble dealing with the stress caused by being in college.

New Attachment Items

I am glad I decided to go to college.
I am glad I decided to attend this particular college.
Getting a college degree is very important to me.
I am happy with the choice of classes at this college.
I plan to stay at this college until I earn a degree or certificate.
I am satisfied with my classes this semester.
I am very satisfied with my teachers this semester.

New Academic Adjustment Items

I am keeping up with my school work.
I am satisfied with how I'm doing on my school work.
I'm not working as hard as I should on my school work.
Usually, I don't feel like studying.
I have had trouble concentrating when I study.

New Social Adjustment Items

I am meeting as many people and making as many friends as I want at college.
There are several people I'm close to on this campus.
I can talk with some people at college about any problems I have.
I'm happy with my social life at college.

Short Form — Adapted Version of

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (Baker & Siryk, 1989)

NAME:_____

ID #:_____ TODAY'S DATE:_____

SEX: ❑ Male ❑ Female DATE OF BIRTH:_____

ETHNIC BACKGROUND: (optional)
❑ Asian or Pacific Islander ❑ American Indian or Alaskan Native
❑ Black, Non-Hispanic ❑ Hispanic
❑ White, Non-Hispanic ❑ Nonresident Alien

Have you attended college prior to this semester? ❑ Yes ❑ No
If "Yes," did you attend Parkland College? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Directions

For each of the following statements, circle the asterisk that best represents how closely the statement applies to you. Circle only one asterisk for each statement. To change an answer, draw an X through the incorrect response and circle the desired response.

	Not True at All for Me				Very True for Me
1. I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.	*	*	*	*	*
2. I am keeping up with my school work.	*	*	*	*	*
3. I am meeting as many people and making as many friends as I want at college.	*	*	*	*	*
4. I have been feeling sad and moody a lot.	*	*	*	*	*
5. I am satisfied with how I'm doing on my school work.	*	*	*	*	*
6. I am glad I decided to go to college.	*	*	*	*	*
7. I am glad I decided to attend this particular college.	*	*	*	*	*
8. I'm not working as hard as I should on my school work.	*	*	*	*	*
9. There are several people I'm close to on this campus.	*	*	*	*	*
10. Getting a college degree is very important to me.	*	*	*	*	*
11. I have been having a lot of headaches.	*	*	*	*	*
12. Usually, I don't feel like studying.	*	*	*	*	*
13. I am happy with the choice of classes at this college.	*	*	*	*	*
14. I have been getting angry too easily.	*	*	*	*	*
15. I have had trouble concentrating when I study.	*	*	*	*	*
16. I plan to stay at this college until I earn a degree or certificate.	*	*	*	*	*
17. I have been feeling very lonely at college.	*	*	*	*	*
18. I am satisfied with my classes this semester.	*	*	*	*	*
19. I am very satisfied with my teachers this semester.	*	*	*	*	*
20. I can talk with some people at college about any problems I have.	*	*	*	*	*
21. I am having trouble dealing with the stress caused by being in college.	*	*	*	*	*
22. I'm happy with my social life at college.	*	*	*	*	*

VITA

LINDA HAMMAN MOORE

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Education (Educational Psychology: Quantitative and Evaluative Research Methodologies), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2000.

M.S. in Counseling Psychology, University of Southern Mississippi, 1981. (Additional course work in Counseling Interventions With Children, Child Psychopathology, and Research Design, University of Southern Mississipppi, 1988-1989).

B.M.Ed. in Music Education, The Ohio State University, 1977.

Certificate/Licensure: National Board for Certified Counselors (#33641); National Certified Counselor, Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselor.

EXPERIENCE

Counselor, Parkland College, Champaign, Illinois, April 1994 to present. Academic, personal, and career development counseling; transfer advising; liaison with various academic departments, in-state universities.

Intake Counselor, Parkland College, Champaign, Illinois, March 1992 to April 1994. Counseling students on a walk-in basis (part time).

Therapist, Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois, 1992 to 1993. Therapist for children in treatment foster homes.

Supervisor of Child/Family Counseling & Treatment Foster Care Programs, Coordinator of Adoptions, Post-Adoption Services, and Pregnancy/Early Parent Counseling, Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois, September 1989 to February 1992. Supervision of counselors serving families in which abuse/neglect had been indicated; supervision of case managers for treatment foster care families; recruiting, training, and licensing treatment foster homes; coordinating clinical case consultations; serving as member of the management team; counseling emotionally/behaviorally disturbed youth in treatment foster care; coordinating referrals to both programs from the Department of Children and Family Services.

Recruiting adoptive families for Special Needs children; training/licensing potential adoptive parents; counseling birth parents regarding options; conducting post-adoption searches; supervision of staff members providing services to adoptive families and teen mothers; facilitating Adoption Triangle, a support group for adoptees, adoptive parents, and birth parents.

EXPERIENCE (continued)

Therapist in Private Practice, Pediatric Clinic of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, January 1989 to August 1989.

Clinic Manager, Southern Subregion, Children's Services Specialist/Children's Services Coordinator, Pine Belt Mental Health and Retardation Services, September 1981 to October 1988. Supervision of clinical staff in five-county subregion; writing clinical and clinic management policy; serving as liaison between clinical staff and Executive Director; recruiting/selecting clinical staff members; coordinating schedules/service provision of center psychiatrists and consultant psychologists; clinical program development.

Individual, group, and family therapy with a diverse caseload; consulting with area professionals and agencies; psychological testing; mental health and custody evaluations; presenting educational programs; assisting in writing grant applications; providing emergency services; supervising master's level interns in Counseling Psychology and Social work; supervising staff members in areas of children's treatment, sexual abuse, and crisis intervention.

Therapist in Private Practice, Hattiesburg Psychotherapy Group, 1986 to 1987.

Intern, Pine Belt Mental Health & Retardation Services, June to August 1981. Individual and family therapy with a diverse caseload.

Graduate Assistant, University of Southern Mississippi Counseling Psychology Department, 1980 to 1981. Compiled data for local resource book; typed manuscripts to be submitted for publication; helped organize interchange activity between secondary school gifted students and USM professors.

Substitute teacher, Hattiesburg, Mississippi Public Schools, 1979 to 1980.

Teacher, Monte Vista Kindergarten, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, 1979.

General Music Teacher & Choral Director, Hedgesville Middle School, Berkeley County, West Virginia Public Schools, 1977 to 1978.

ORGANIZATIONS

American Evaluation Association
American Educational Research Association

PRESENTATIONS

Integrated Studies Communities: Supporting the At-Risk Student. Workshop presented with Dorothy Voyles at Learning Communities Conference, Innovations: The Sky's the Limit, Chicago, IL, November 17-19, 1999.

PRESENTATIONS (continued)

A Mixed-Method Approach to Evaluating Community College Learning Communities: The Integrated Studies Communities at Parkland College. Paper presented at the annual conference of the American Evaluation Association, Orlando, FL, November 3-6, 1999.

Integrated Studies Communities at Parkland College: A Three-tiered Model. Workshop presented at Learning Communities Conference, Creating and Sustaining Learning Communities: Connections, Collaboration, and Crossing Borders, Tampa, FL., March 11-13, 1999.

Evaluating the Aesthetic Face of Leadership. Roundtable presentation with Theresa Souchet at Annual Conference of the American Evaluation Association, Chicago, IL, November 4-7, 1998.

PUBLICATIONS

Hamman Moore, L. (1997). [Review of the book It takes two: Managing yourself when working with bosses and other authority figures.] NACADA Journal, 17, 63-64.

Souchet, T., & Hamman Moore, L. (in press). Evaluating the aesthetic face of leadership. In R. Stake (Series Ed.) & A. Benson, M. Hinn, & C. Lloyd (Vol. Eds.), Advances in program evaluation (volume title not yet announced). Stamford, CT: JAI Press.

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